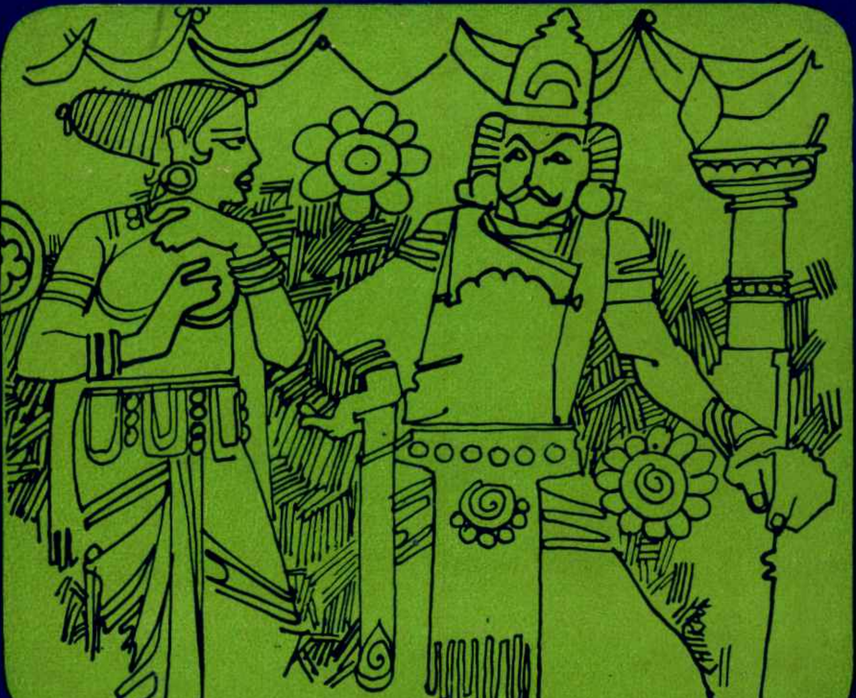
concept of ancient indian theatre

m. christopher byrski



Concept of
Ancient Indian Theatre

Dedicated to

PADMA SUBRAHMANYAM

Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre

by

M. Christopher Byrski

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

(Names given between brackets refer to the Bibliography. All the other abbreviations which are to be found in the text will always stand together with the names of the authors and can be referred directly to the Bibliography)

ABr	Āitareya Brāhmaṇa (Keith)
AV	Atharvaveda
BG	Bhagavadgītā (Radhakrishnan)
BP.GOS	Bhāvaprakāśa, Gaekwad's Oriental Series
BUP	Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad (Hume)
CUP	Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (Hume)
Dl.L.	Dhvanyālokalocana (Tripathi)
DR	Daśarūpaka (Shastri, Haas)
HABh	Hindi Abhinavabhāratī (Viśveśvar)
HND	Hindi Nāṭyadarpaṇa (Viśveśvar)
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly
JBr	Jāiminīya Brāhmaṇa (Vira)
KBr	Kāuṣītaki Brāhmṇa (Keith)
KUp	Kāuṣītaki Upaniṣad (Hume)
MBh	Mahābhārata
ND	Nāṭyadarpaṇa (Viśveśvar)
NLRK	Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa (Dillon)
NS.GOS	Nāṭyaśāstra, Gaekwad's Oriental Series
NS.KM	Nāṭyaśāstra, Kāvyamāla
NS.MMG	Nāṭyaśāstrā, Manmohan Ghosh
R	Rāmāyaṇa
RV	Ṛgveda Saṁhitā (Wilson)

SB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (Eggling)
SD	Sāhitya-darpaṇa (Ballantyne)
SK	Sāṁkhya-Kārikā (Jha)
SUp	Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad
URC	Uttararāmacarita (Bhavabhūti)
YS(M)	Yajurveda Saṁhitā (Mādhyandina)

PREFACE

In a paper entitled 'Studies in *Nāṭya*'[1] and presented to the research seminar of the College of Indology in 1962, I made the following remark about the relationship of the Vedas and *Nāṭya*; 'If the Vedas do incorporate the whole of the human cultural heritage of their epoch it is natural to derive from them theatre which is the most comprehensive art. This is the real meaning of Bharatamuni's parable.'[2] This statement, imperfect as it was, truly deserves to be called the seed of the present thesis. It contains two important observations. One, more general, describes the whole of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* as a parable. Another one, concerning the relationship of *Nāṭya* and the Vedas, indicates the mode of interpretation of this parable. All the implications of this remark were not immediately clear to me. It was only after a series of Vedic lectures delivered at that time by Dr. V. S. Agrawala, had broadened my understanding of the Vedic ideas and of the Vedic and the Brāhmanic[3] mythology, that I realised some of these implications. The central motif of this mythology, i.e., the sacrifice seemed to supply the much needed key to the proper understanding of the mythological account of the origin of *Nāṭya*. A paper prepared at that time for the Paderewski Foundation Annual Symposium in Delhi (1962-3) and entitled 'Theatre and Sacrifice (*Nāṭya* and *Yajña*)'[4] presents a very brief and at places imprecise outline of

[1] *Bharati*, Bulletin of the College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University, No.6, Part II, 1962-3.

[2] *op. cit*, p.115.

[3] Brāhmaṇic, i.e., related to the Brāhmana literature in distinction to Brahminic, i.e., related to Brahmins. This distinction will be kept throughout this thesis.

[4] Published by the Paderewski Foundation and in *Prajña*, Banaras Hindu University Journal, Vol. IX(1), Oct. 1963.

this new approach. Yet even then I was not fully convinced that this idea might take the form of a full-fledged thesis. In the summer of 1963 I discussed the synopsis of my thesis with Dr. V. Raghavan in Madras. Already at that time I included this problem into my thesis. I decided to investigate it under the heading 'The Philosophy of Theatre'. But it was supposed to be only one of the three parts of my thesis. A few months later I became aware that I should limit myself to this problem alone; for by then I was fully convinced that it perfectly fulfils the requirements of a thesis and that its implications reach further than I initially expected.

The original synopsis did not remain unchanged. I had to abandon some of the topics which I have first included in it, since they appeared to rest on somewhat misconceived premises. A comparison of a theatre-hall to a temple belongs to this category.[1] Some other topics unexpectedly developed from a modest initial idea into very important concepts. The metamorphosis of the role of Indra in the defence of *Nāṭya* into the *dāivāsuram* concept of *Nāṭya* belongs to this category. When at last the synopsis acquired its final shape, the necessity of giving an exact characteristic of the mythology of NŚ became its first point. Part I deals with this problem. Chapter I of it furnishes a short review of different approaches towards the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*. It is meant to be a survey of what has been done so far in the field of the interpretation of the mythology of NŚ. I believe that no important contribution in this respect has been omitted, although I have to admit that some of the old contributions to the knowledge of the ancient Indian theatre made by the Western scholars were beyond my reach in Banaras.[2] Chap-

[1] This reservation concerns only the earliest period in the history of *Nāṭya*. Later on the possibility of such a comparison cannot be ruled out. The theatre-hall of the classical Sanskrit theatre of Kerala, which is called *Kuṭṭampalam* has many affinities to a temple. See '*Kūṭiyāṭṭam*, a thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Letters of the University of Madras, by P.C. Krishnan Nambudiripad, January 1962 (No. T 1427), p.71-2.

[2] I had to reconcile myself with almost complete lack of German sources. Besides on this occasion I would like to offer my apology to Prof. Dr. J. Gonda in case I might have misrepresented some of his views. Unhappily because of my ignorance of German I had to rely on the impromptu renderings of my German-speaking friends, lacking, of course, the proper knowledge of the subject. See also the Postscript, p. 191.

ter II does not bring any specially new material. Its only purpose is to show that although the assessment of the age of *Nāṭya* as given by Dr. Keith is the most cautious and the best proved one, it cannot be considered final and may be safely extended as far back as, at least, the age of Pāṇini. This 'opening to the past' was necessary in order to remove the basic obstacle for considering the *Nāṭyotpatti* mythology as belonging to the earliest epic period. Once the non-existence of *Nāṭya* before Patañjali ceased to be uncontestable, it remained to prove in detail what I have already suspected before, i.e., that the mythology in question is a product of the epoch which saw the close of the Brāhmaṇic age and the beginning of the epic period. This has been done in Chapter III of Part I. The detailed analysis of the character of the deities appearing in the mythological account of the *Nāṭyotpatti* revealed their proper age and placed this account around the middle of the first millennium BC.

Part II of this study presents the proper thesis. Its Chapter I establishes a concrete historical connexion between *Yajña* and *Nāṭya*. A direct contact between the two constitutes one element of this connexion. Another mode of relationship is their contact through the *Indramaha* festival. This assertion is based on the fact that the *Indramaha* festival has its roots in the sacrificial ritual. The subsequent three chapters offer an interpretation of the three major problems of the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti*. It is first of all the relationship of *Nāṭya* and the Vedas. Next comes the attitude of the gods, Ṛṣis and men towards *Nāṭya*. And finally the *dāivāsuram* aspect of *Nāṭya*. *Yajña*, of course, constitutes all the time the unifying motif of this interpretation. The foremost requirement in each case mentioned above was to give a proper definition of these phenomena in their sacrificial surrounding. Only after the meaning of these concepts had in this way been properly defined, I ventured to offer my own interpretation of *Nāṭya* with reference to these phenomena.

Part III broadens the above interpretation of *Nāṭya* so that it may embrace the concepts of *itivṛtta* and of *rasa* i.e., speaking in traditional terms, the body and the soul of *Nāṭya*. In this part both *Yajña* and *Nāṭya* are shown in their relationship to action in general. Chapter I offers an analysis of *Yajña* conceived as a mythological happening and as an archetype of all actions both in their course and in their aim. The following

chapter contains an analysis of the *itivṛtta*, i.e., the structure of performance.[1] The basic feature of this analysis is an attempt to show that *itivṛtta* is a concept embodying all regularities common to all actions. Thus *itivṛtta* emerges as an abstract standard action. Its course and aim, therefore, speaking in general terms, have to be identical with the course and aim of *Yajña* which is an archetypal action. Chapter III supplies an answer to a query concerning the nature of relationship between such an *itivṛtta* shown in the form of a performance on the stage, and a spectator. The foremost problem here was to find out the exact manner in which NŚ relates *rasas* to *itivṛtta* and to see whether, at least on some occasions, NŚ goes beyond strictly technical discussion of this problem, offering some suggestions concerning the philosophical aspect of the concept of *rasa*. After this had been done I yielded to a temptation of examining in this light Abhinavagupta's contribution to the theory of *rasa*. Thus departing from the text of NŚ I have introduced Abhinava's concept of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* and *tanmayībhāva*. In introducing these concepts I felt justified by their rather technical connotation which, enriching somewhat more primitive theory presented in NŚ, does not affect its original philosophical premises.

The last part of the book was not originally planned. It was only in the course of my studies of *rasa* theory that the *śānta rasa* began to appear as an altogether separate concept. It has become obvious to me that this *rasa* in the form it has been given in the inserted passage of NŚ cannot belong to the original scheme of the eight *rasas*. Since my view in this respect received a strong and authoritative support of Dr. V. Raghavan[2] I decided therefore that the problem of the *śānta rasa* has to be excluded from my original plan. It was due to the suggestion of once again Dr. V. Raghavan[3] concerning the possibility of

[1] Because of the necessity of re-evaluation of the entire concept, Chapter II has become somewhat too long. Having entered the jungle of details the reader may lose for a moment the awareness of the main purpose of this analysis. The metaphorical terminology of this discussion which I used following the tradition, may even augment this impression. I may therefore request the indulgence of the reader for this shortcoming.

[2] Raghavan, *NR*, p. 15ff.

[3] *op. cit.*, p. 50.

Buddhistic affiliations of the *śānta rasa*, that the role of it in the history of the philosophy of *Nāṭya* became clear to me. Now I decided to add a separate part entitled 'Reaction' and dealing with the problem of the *śānta rasa* which undoubtedly represents the Buddhistic reaction against the earlier sacrificial concept of *Nāṭya*.

Here my study ends. It may be regarded as an exposition of the earliest philosophical concept of *Nāṭya*. Throughout this work I did not try to avoid history and I believe that some interesting contributions regarding the history of *Nāṭya* can be found in it. Yet my main effort was directed towards finding out what was the philosophical concept of theatre—a theatre the technique of which is so exhaustively described in the pages of NŚ.

M.C. Byrski

Warsaw
April 23, 1974

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Before presenting the results of my research I should like to express my great indebtedness and gratitude to all these scholars, who carried out often a very ungrateful task of compiling indexes, dictionaries, editing texts, making translations or writing surveys and histories. It is because of the labours of a legion dedicated workers in the field of Indology, that each and every sentence of this thesis could have been written. Let the bibliography which goes together with this book as well as the references of it, be considered an acknowledgement of my indebtedness to them.

Besides I would like to express sincere gratitude to my guide Dr. A. K. Narain for his liberal guidance, his confidence in me, and his unceasing encouragement which permitted me to carry this work to a close. My special thanks go to late Dr. V. S. Agrawala, whose Vedic lectures gave me the sense of direction and purpose in my studies of mythology. In fact it is to his indirect inspiration that I owe the very conception of my thesis. I should also like to thank Dr. V. S. Pathak, now Head of the Department of Ancient History and Culture, University of Gorakhpur, who patiently discussed with me the synopsis of this book and who went carefully through its manuscript offering many suggestions and contributing a lot towards its improvement. I owe my gratitude also to Dr. V. Raghavan, who always readily offered his advice and through whose good offices I have become acquainted with the classical Sanskrit theatre of Kerala (*Kūḍiyāṭṭam*) which, indeed, has become a welcome counterbalance to the theoretical enquiry presented in this book. I may only express my regret that the distance between Madras and Banaras did not allow me to take more often the advantage of Dr. Raghavan's expert advice. To Dr. T. R. V. Murti I am obliged for his generous gift of time to discuss with

me the problem of the *śānta rasa* and to offer his interpretation of the *śānta rasa* text of *NŚ* and of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. I am also thankful to Pt. Jagannatha Upadhyaya of the Sanskrit University, Banaras, for sharing with me his views concerning the *śānta rasa* theory. My obligation is also due to late Pt. Ambika Prasad Upadhyaya whose valuable tuitions helped me to understand the most important portions of NŚ and of Abhinava's commentary on it. Further I would like to thank Pt. Ratinath Jha of the Sanskrit College, Banaras Hindu University, for his ungrudging help in reading some portions of *NŚ* and the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Miss Winifred Lewis of the Basanta Kumar Mullick Trust, Banaras, obliged me indeed by volunteering her expert help in correcting the language of this essay. Unhappily, approaching hot season prevented her from carrying out corrections beyond Part I of it. For correcting the remaining parts I am indebted to Miss Mary Searle of England, who did her best within the short time which I had put at her disposal.

Among those who read the typescript of this work was my first teacher of Sanskrit, Professor Dr. E. Suszkiewicz, who with his usual precision pointed out all mistakes and omissions. Without his help preparing the typescript for print would have been a much more time-consuming task. Last but not least I would like to express my hearty thanks to the Paderewski Foundation, Inc., New York, U.S.A. and to Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, India, whose generous assistance made it possible for me to conduct, complete and publish this research work in India. Finally, Shri Devendra Jain, Editorial chief of Messrs Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. deserve great thanks for making this book look more promising than the content itself would allow.

Part I

PROBLEMS OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST ADHYĀYA OF NĀṬYAŚĀSTRA

1

REVIEW OF ANCIENT AND MODERN APPROACHES

The *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* uses the language of mythology. Our comprehension of this *adhyāya* depends, therefore, on the way we approach and understand its mythology. It is from this viewpoint that we shall attempt to review some of the more interesting opinions concerning the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*. In the course of our review we shall try to answer the following question: What the mythological account of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* means for an author under review and, therefore, what does he take the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* itself for? The answers to this question of each reviewed opinion will allow us to form a general idea about the trends prevailing in this field of research in *Nāṭya*.

The earliest work which can supply such an answer is Abhinava's commentary on NŚ called the Abhinavabhāratī.[1] Abhinava accepts without criticism the basic text on which he comments. He does not question the reality of the mythological happenings which this text describes. Yet his affirmation is far from simple belief in them. Commenting upon the seventh verse of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*[2] Abhinava says that the creation of *Nāṭya* cannot be compared to an ordinary making of things, which is *vyavahārasiddha* as for instance, making of a pot by a potter. On the contrary, *Nāṭya's* existence is due to inborn original knowledge possessed by Brahmā—due to his *upajñā*. A modern commentator, Acharya Viśveśvar, adds that because *Nāṭya* is created by Brahmā, therefore, unlike making

[1] See Kane, *HSP*. De, *SP*.

[2] *Śrūyatāṁ nāṭyavedasya saṁbhavo brahmanirmitaḥ* (*NS*, *GOS*, I. 7.)

of a pot etc., its making is *apratyakṣa*, *i.e.*, imperceptible.[1] Thus, Abhinava accepts the fact of the divine creation of *Nāṭya*. Taking into consideration the role of Brahmā as the creator of the universe we can assume that Abhinava understood the creation of *Nāṭya* and the events which accompanied it in a similar way to the creation of the universe—which is equally beyond human perception. Apparently the faithful account of the creation of *Nāṭya* was not, according to Abhinava, the only purpose of Bharata. His second important aim was to furnish a pattern of behaviour for all those who wish to organise a theatrical performance. Offering his commentary on the verses describing the appointment of gods to guard a theatre-hall, Abhinava says that men of similar character to the respective gods should be posted during a performance at the places allotted to them.[2] The fact that Indra takes his place on the one side of a stage for instance, indicates according to Abhinava a place where a king should take his place during an ordinary performance.[3] Abhinava seems to be somewhat aware of the naivety of such a suggestion. Thus he says that the fact of the appointment of gods will bring necessary result by itself even if it is impossible to find men of disposition similar to that of the gods.[4] Besides these two, there is one more interesting problem shedding additional light on the attitude of Abhinava in regard to the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti*. The introductory stanza of the first chapter mentions Pitāmaha and Maheśvara but omits Viṣṇu. In contradistinction to other commentators whom he quotes, Abhinava does not try to justify the god's absence with his minimal role in the creation of *Nāṭya*. Far from looking for such a trivial argument he states rather highhandedly that it is unbecoming (*anucita*) to discuss the absence of a salutation to a god. He[5] refuses to comment upon one of the most interesting traits of

[1] "*ghatādīnām utpattir vyavahārasiddhāiva kulālādibhiḥ abhyupagamyate iti ghaṭaḥ kriyate iti yuktam/na tv evam nāṭyasya/tasya tūtpattir eva viriñcyupajṇatayā sthite ti*" (*HABh*, p. 62.)

[2] "*anena cāitat tulyā eva maṇḍapabhāgarakṣā kācin niyojyā iti darśyate/*" (p. 31, v.I.) (*NS. GOS*, I, 83 ff.)

[3] "*pārśve svayam iti rājādes tat sthānam ity uktam/*" (*HABh*, p. 168).

[4] "*sarvathā tadalābhe niyamādṛṣṭam eva/*" (*op. cit*, p. 163-4).

[5] (*op. cit*, p. 14) "*etad api anamaskārahetunirūpaṇasyānucitatvādasat/*".

the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*. Summarising our remarks we can say that Abhinava treats the events of the creation of *Nāṭya* like any other events connected with the creative activity of Brahmā. Consequently the story of *Nāṭyotpatti* is for him a description of events transcending ordinary human perception. The *Abhinavabhāratī* is the only work commenting on the NŚ left to us by Indian antiquity. It was preceded by a number of commentaries which Abhinava quotes. Yet because of their brevity these quotations offer negligible insight into the attitudes of the quoted authorities towards the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*. Neither are there available any later contributions in this field. Thus, we can safely abandon Indian antiquity and begin our survey of the achievements of modern scholars.

Never again did the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* earn as much attention. Modern scholars, no longer capable of assuming the uninhibited attitude of Abhinava towards mythology have been somewhat afraid of it. Only few of them made more than passing remarks about that story. Although nobody offered a comprehensive study of it, yet, often important statements were made which by all means deserve our attention. In first reviewing Abhinava's work we adopted a chronological order which we shall now discontinue, since it is impossible to speak about any development of theories. Everybody owes little to his predecessors and makes his own guesses independently. After this we shall group all opinions according to the character of their treatment of the subject.

Undoubtedly a historical approach is best represented. Its foremost thesis is that our mythological account is a testimony of an effort to gain prestige and orthodox blessings for the art of theatre. Besides, this approach tries to define socio-historical conditions which were responsible for this particular shape of our legend. The already classical work of Dr. Keith subscribes to this trend. Dr. Keith concludes his account of the mythological happenings of Chapters I, V and XX of NŚ by saying : "the legend is interesting for its determination to secure the participation of every member of the Hindu Trinity in the creation of new art."[1] The argument of the derivation of *Nāṭya* from the

[1] Keith, *SD*, p. 13.

Vedas and its being a fifth one serves a similar purpose. Dr. Keith, however, makes a serious mistake in that he ignores the fact that the story of the creation of *Nāṭya* as given in Chapter I of NŚ is complete. It includes both the contribution of dance and *vṛttis*. In that story god Śiva can claim at least some importance but Viṣṇu is hardly noticed at all.[1] Thus, Dr. Keith's remark will hold true only with regard to the eclectic story which he recounted. As we can see Dr. Keith does not go beyond the assertion that the legend aims at mobilising all the highest authorities in the service of *Nāṭya*. Two other scholars, Dr. M.M. Ghosh and Dr. I. Shekhar, hold a similar view but go much further in their effort to find a historical background for the legend.

According to Dr. Ghosh: "the story of the Nāṭyaśāstra is but a badly made legend worth no credence."[2] This is because of the desire of the Śūdras to win for *Nāṭya* "a place in the religious ceremonies of Brahmanism...and.. to soften the anti-Śūdra attitude of the ritual ridden orthodox lawgivers and their descendants to whom the mystic name of Veda appealed more than the aesthetic feats of *naṭas*."[3] Interpreted in such a way our mythological story earned a final damnation by Dr. Ghosh who wrote : "the Nāṭyaśāstra legend about the origin of *Nāṭya* is palpably a badly made fable fitted to the text in still worse manner."[4] The attitude which Dr. Ghosh assumes in another paper dealing with the origin of *Nāṭya*, published considerably later,[5] is an elaboration of his earlier conclusion. Now Dr. Ghosh suggests a pre-Aryan origin of *Nāṭya* concentrating his attention upon the legend of Chapter IV of NŚ. His chief argument here is the worship of Śiva, with which he connects the origins of *Nāṭya*. Since our concern is not with that legend we shall refrain from discussing this portion of his arguments. Dr. Ghosh is not alone in searching for the origins of *Nāṭya* in pre-Aryan times. The same thesis has very forcefully indeed been put forward by Dr. I. Shekhar in his extremely well-published book entitled *Sanskrit Drama : its Origin and Decline*.[6] Dr.

[1] M.M. Ghosh shares our view, see *CHHD*, p. 5.
[2] M.M. Ghosh, *PNS*, p. 72.
[3] *op. cit*, p. 73.
[4] *op. cit*, p. 75.
[5] *CHHD*, Calcutta, 1958.
[6] Published by Brill, Leiden, 1960.

Shekhar opens his deliberations with the following remark: "The traditional account given in the opening chapters of the Nāṭya-śāstra puts the stamp of a divine origin on the Sanskrit drama. However, the entire account is in the nature of a fabrication and the contents appear to have been rehandled freely and frequently. Since the stage was set in the epic age, Bharata had to invoke the favour of the gods so as to claim the treatise to be regarded as a fifth Veda."[1] Here the author does not differ from Dr. Keith and Dr. Ghosh. But in his final conclusion he goes much further than these two scholars. After a review of the legend he writes: "This traditional account preserved in the Nāṭyaśāstra, indicates:

1. That sage Bharata had to strive hard to secure a divine origin for the art of dramaturgy. In addition to securing the co-operation of major and minor gods, he introduced several such elements which suited the likings of the leading gods;
2. That Bharata spared no pains in making NŚ a compendium of all arts and the sacred books. By borrowing different elements from the Saṁhitās, he could float the treatise as a fifth Veda, otherwise it run the risk of being received indifferently;
3. That the Nāṭyaśāstra was composed to provide relaxation to all the *Varṇas* and especially for those who had no access to the holy books. Thus, it opened a field for the non-Aryan artists, *Naṭas* and actors, who did not belong to the Aryan classes;
4. That female artistes from Śūdras and other low classes of non-Aryans were probably available for acting when Bharata staged the play;
5. Possibly, Indra and the other gods refused to take the responsibility of staging a play because the Aryan community perhaps lacked the traditions, actors and other equipment. So Bharata defended the honour of the Aryan chief by taking the burden on himself;
6. It is significant that all the plays enacted by Bharata glorified the actions of the gods, thereby perhaps, he impressed

[1] Shekhar, *SDOD*, p. 34.

on the priests the harmless character of the dramatic art. But no plays mentioned by Bharata have come down to us;

7. That god Śiva commended the use of dance which, perhaps, heretobefore was not approved by the Brāhmaṇas. The association of Śiva lent a sacred character to this art and may have appeased the non-Aryans who must have felt happy at the inclusion of a god with strong non-Aryan sympathies in the evolution of the Sanskrit drama."[1]

All this, according to the author, signifies that Bharata "had to present the work in a convincing form without publicising its non-Aryan points.[2] Our foremost objection in the case of both Ghosh and Shekhar is directed to their effort to present the mythological account of the NŚ as a camouflage for the unholy although commendable machinations of Śūdras or non-Aryans in order to get the Aryan recognition of *Nāṭya*. This approach finds little support in NŚ and elsewhere. We could agree that the last chapter of NŚ may reflect an effort on the part of the *naṭas* to obtain higher social status. But happily there is fully convincing evidence that the two accounts should not be considered parts of the same story. The legend of the last chapter runs concurrently with the *Nāṭyotpatti* account. The descent of *Nāṭya* on the earth is illogical in the light of the events of Chapter I which had already taken place on the very Jambūdvīpa itself. Besides, Indra explicitly says that an object of diversion is needed which will be *sārva-varṅika*, i.e., for all men.[3] Further he declares the inability of the gods to stage it and Bharata, a sage, but undoubtedly a human being, is ordered to stage it with the help of his hundred sons.[4] It is obvious that

[1] Shekhar, *SDOD*, p. 35-6.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *NŚ, GOS*, I. 8 ff "*pūrva kṛtayuge viprā vṛtte svāyambhuve'ntare/*
......................................loke sukhaduḥkhite//
..
jambūdvīpe samākrānte.............. ....//
mahendrapramukhāir devāir uktaḥ kila pitāmahaḥ/
krīḍanīyakam icchāmo dṛśyam śravyam ca yad bhavet//
na vedavyavahāro'yam saṁśrāvyaḥ śūdrajātiṣu/
tasmāt sṛjāparaṁ vedaṁ pañcamaṁ sārvavarṇikam//".

[4] *op. cit*, 22 ff "*grahaṇe dhāraṇe jñāne prayoge cāsya sattama/*
'aśaktā bhagavan devā ayogyā nāṭyakarmaṇi/

the transfer of *Nāṭya* to man is effected already in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend. Besides, the actors in it are considered Brāhmins. This is mentioned by the way, with no trace of the strain of a debatable claim which can be traced in the account of the last chapter of NŚ. It will be more just to take the state of affairs described in Chapter I as earlier than that in the last one and to compare the fate of the actors to that of the Vedic *rathakāras* who were Brāhmins at first and only later became Śūdras.[1] Further, we object to the treatment of the whole of *Nāṭya* as an art alien to the Aryans. This art, according to both scholars being a special domain of the non-Aryans, needed aryanising treatment or 'coating' to become palatable to the Aryans. Dr. Shekhar says that Bharata wanted to present it without publicising its non-Aryan points. On the other hand according to him its most non-Aryan aspect is its association with god Śiva.[2] Let use see now what NŚ says about this problem. In Chapter IV Brahmā is made to go to Śiva's abode, wait on him. and submissively accepts his recommendations. Do we need better evidence of the non-Aryan aspects of *Nāṭya* when the highest god of the Aryans is ordered to bow in front of a divinity of the scorned non-Aryan origin and so closely associated with those loathed in RV *śiśnadevāḥ*. Dr. Shekhar himself provides the most destructive argument for his thesis. He writes: "the Aryans who must have been so terribly impressed with a malignant, active like Rudra-Śiva who no doubt entertained intimate associations with non-Aryans and who both in the meditative state of Yogin and in the dancing pose of Naṭarāja must have fascinated the Aryan mind added his name to their expanding pantheon."[3] Was it necessary then to comouflage the non-Aryan points of a comparatively minor problem of *Nāṭya* when god Śiva with Devī and *Liṅgam* (who can find a more non-Aryan point) was already voluntarily

ya ime vedaguhyajñā ṛṣayaḥ saṁsitavratāḥ|
eta 'sya grahaṇe śektāḥ prayoge dhāraṇe tathā|
śrutvā tu śakravacanaṁ māmāhāmbujasāmbhavaḥ|
tvam putraśatasaṁyuktaḥ prayoktā 'sya bhavānagha||".

[1] Kane, *HD*.
[2] Shekhar, *SDOD*, pp. 20-21 and 36.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 24.

accepted by Aryans?[1] At least NŚ's answer is an emphatic 'no'. Bharata says: "At the time of Nīlakaṇṭha's (Śiva) dance I have seen his Graceful Style appropriate to the Erotic Sentiment, and this requires beautiful dresses and is endowed with gentle *Aṅgahāras* and has Sentiments (*rasa*), States (*bhāva*) and action as its soul."[2] He, further, proposes to Brahmā to include it into *Nāṭya*. Brahmā readily agrees and cooperates in its introduction by creating Apsarases. This is no hide-and-seek. Everything is plainly stated. All the rest of the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend can be taken only as a proof that theatre was in its main proportions known to the Aryans[3] who gladly received the contribution of the non-Aryans in the form of a particular dance 'endowed with gentle *Aṅgahāras*'. The account of Chapter IV is so obviously a late sectarian addition anticipating such attitude as that demonstrated later by Śāradātanaya who retells the legend making Mahāviṣṇu an ultimate source of *Nāṭya*, that it would be a great inconsistency to rely on its testimony when dealing with the early history of *Nāṭya*. Another argument of Dr. Shekhar demanding criticism is his assertion that the seeking of divine origin, help and patronage is one more ingenuity of NŚ employed to cover these non-Aryan points of the art.[4] He believes that "if the material (of NŚ) was of purely Aryan descent and the work was of sterling quality, there was little necessity to flatter the divinities."[5] Seeking divine origin, help, and patronage for different human enterprises was at that time a rule in all walks of life. Does Dr. Shekhar remember that Vālmīki also told the story of his vision of Brahmā at the beginning of the Rāmāyaṇa? Perhaps his material, too, was not of pure Aryan descent and sterling quality.

It seems, that Dr. Shekhar and to some extent Dr. Ghosh remain under the wrong impression that the non-Aryans, although defeated, consciously preserved their identity but lost

[1] Shekhar, *SDOD*, p. 24-25.

[2] "*nṛttāṅgahārasampannā rasabhāvakriyātmikā/*
dṛṣṭā mayā bhagavato nīlakaṇṭhasya nṛtyataḥ/
kāiśikī ślakṣṇanāipathyā śṛṅgārarasambhavā/ (*NŚ.MMG*, p. 7-8).

[3] This is supported by Yajurveda's testimony for instance (*nṛttāya śāilūṣam*); (30 6.20) for other arguments see p. 87.

[4] Shekhar, *SDOD*, pp. 31, 35, 36.

[5] *op. cit*, p. 36.

their pride and tried to smuggle themselves together with their culture into the Aryan fold by using camouflage and flattery. The actual situation was certainly different. Completely overrun, the non-Aryans probably lost in Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa most of their upper class. The ordinary people remained. And as happens throughout history, the victors willy-nilly yielded to the influence of the conquered, accepting and integrating with their own culture everything that attracted them, including most probably that particular form of dance which is mentioned in NŚ as contributed by Śiva.

This historical trend counts among its adherents the largest number of scholars. The views of a further two among them deserve to be presented here. R.V. Jagirdar and K.M. Varma hold in common one aspect of their treatment of that story. Generally speaking, both of them admit that our legend is some sort of history and both of them elaborate their initial suggestion, not in the field of history *par excellence* but in the related field of the technical development of *Nāṭya*. The approach of R.V. Jagirdar abounds in contradictions. While on the one hand he is inclined to believe, together with Dr. Ghosh and Dr. Shekhar, that *Nāṭya* had some non-Aryan affiliations,[1] on the other hand he holds that it was the Vedic tribe of *Bhāratas* which was the first sponsor of *Nāṭya*.[2] Elsewhere, referring to the attitudes of modern scholars toward the mythological account of NŚ, Jagirdar writes that "one is rather surprised to find that these scholars should insist that history ought to have been written in those earlier days in the same style as in the modern days."[3] Unhappily the discussion which immediately follows this statement does not give much substance to it. Instead we find Jagirdar directing his attention toward the problem of the *vṛttis*, he takes them as marking the stages of the evolution of drama.[4] Since the problem of the *vṛttis* is of a rather technical nature, its analysis can offer

[1] Jagirdar, *DSL*, p. 36. "...it seems that Sanskrit Drama has least to do with religion or religious rites ; that it is the work of people treated as anti-Vedic, if not as non-Aryan fiends, and that its origins are to be sought in the interest of the lower castes and its patron in a king—a non-Aryan adventurer/Nahuṣa/."

[2] see. p. 93 n.

[3] Jagirdar, *DSL*. p. 22.

[4] *op. cit*, pp. 23ff.

at best only very limited help in reconstructing the historical background of *Nāṭya*. Besides, its importance in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend is utterly insignificant. In the course of his argumentation Jagirdar makes a very pointed remark. He writes : "In explaining any phenomenon by tracing it to God the old sages enunciated a theory or an outlook which has been at least silently acquiesced in;..."[1] Undoubtedly this is how the fact of the creation of *Nāṭya* by Brahmā should be comprehended. It is a pity that Jagirdar failed to see that his formula should be applied to the whole of the legend and not only to the single fact of the creation. After all, our legend has *Nāṭyotpatti* for its title and is nothing less than an elaborate description of that single event. Dr. Varma in his turn holds that the legendary account of the origin of *Nāṭya* "through the mythological veil...certainly refers to some historical facts."[2] He gives a faithful account of the legend, carefully separating the events described in Chapter I from those described in Chapter IV.[3] But in concluding his summary Dr. Varma hardly gives substance to his initial promise. He discusses the following problems : the relation of music and drama, where he challenges the view that the "Indian drama is an opera type";[4] the theory of the development of drama which suggest *bhāṇa* as the original form of drama, which he contradicts on the ground that according to our mythological episode "the first to be created is *samavakāra* while the next is *ḍīma*...";[5] the relation of religion and drama, where he states that "so far as the origin of *Nāṭya* goes, the above episode clearly points out that *Nāṭya* does not originate in religion and is not meant to serve religious purposes ..";[6] finally the problem of interrelation of *Nāṭya*, *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*, where he concludes that "the arts of *nṛtta* and *Nāṭya* are of independent origin... and...*nṛtya*...does not exists at all before *Nāṭya*."[7] As we can

[1] Jagirdar, *DSL*, p. 20.

[2] Varma, *NNN*, p. 27.

[3] *op. cit*, p. 28, he commits a mistake taking *samavakāra* entitled 'Amṛtamanthana' for the first performance. The first one was simply about *dāivāsuram* war (*NŚ*, *GOS*, I, 57). The staging of Amṛtamanthana is described in Chapter IV of NŚ.

[4] *op. cit*, p. 28.

[5] *op. cit*, p. 29.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

see, all these problems concern rather the technical than the historical development of *Nāṭya*. Even the question of its relation to religion, although historical, does not again contribute in this form any sound historical information.[1]

A somewhat similar approach to that hinted at by Mr. Jagirdar has been adopted independently by Dr. C.P. Singh.[2] Dr. Singh begins his enquiry with the following statement : "This story is only an allegory and it does not occupy any special place in the exposition of the tradition of the origin or the development of drama. It is only a description of a form and of an example of the theatrical art which has been made in it."[3] We can see that Dr. Singh spreads the significance of Mr. Jagirdar's remark over the whole of the legend. Since it is a description of a form of the theatrical art it must be based on a certain theory and must express a certain concrete outlook by its author. What is this theory ? According to Dr. Singh the aim of *Nāṭya* is to express in a popular and easy form the metaphysical sense of life and of the cosmos. He ascribes the same role to Vedic sacrifice, the aim of which is a popular exposition of intricate metaphysical truths.[4] Thus, Dr. Singh takes the outlook of the *Nāṭyotpatti* account for a product of the intellectual atmosphere surrounding *Yajña*. Continuing this thought Dr. Singh centres his attention on the sacrificial ritual, where he hopes to find an explanation of the problems posed by the legend of the *Nāṭyotpatti*. When comparing Indra's staff (*jarjara*) with the sacrificial post (*yūpa*) and a theatre hall with the sacrificial shed[5] Dr. Singh remains somewhat true to his approach in the first statement : but he seems to be more concerned with the historical connections of *Nāṭya* and the ritual the proofs of which he sees again in the already mentioned similarities and in the fact that there are elements of theatre in the ritual.[6] If the legend is an allegory then all its pronouncements can hardly be considered a historical evidence. At the most they can hint at the

[1] Varma, *SWB*, p. 131.

[2] *Bhāratīya Nāṭya Paramparā*, Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Patrikā I-II, Banaras 1958.

[3] *op. cit*, p. 36.

[4] *op. cit*, p. 40.

[5] *op. cit*, p. 42-3.

[6] *op. cit*, p. 40-1.

possibility of the historical connection between *Nāṭya* and Vedic sacrifice which has to be proved on other grounds as well. Yet the wording of Dr. Singh's conclusion concerning the connection of *Nāṭya* and the ritual of the Vedic sacrifice is perfectly legitimate. He writes that "the tradition in which NŚ was written, was born, developed and was purified in illustrious and splendid surroundings of the Vedic philosophy, literature and ritual."[1] This is precisely all that can be said on the basis of similarities. Dr. Singh unnecessarily overburdens his arguments with too much of historical significance, although his final conclusion is sufficiently general and thus softens this impression.

Another point of view which calls for attention here is that presented by Dr. A. Gawroñski. Gawroñski's work was ready in manuscript in 1916. Published only thirty years later, in the little-known Polish language, it has escaped the attention of scholars. The book deals with the origin of the ancient Indian theatre and the problem of Greek influence. It is the first scholarly refutation of the theory of Greek influence on Indian drama. The corner-stone of Dr. Gawroñski's approach so far as the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend is concerned is expressed in the following sentence: ".........it appears that, though in legendary form, nevertheless, one can trace in that story almost all the original elements of Indian drama which European scholars succeeded in finding, although they did not plan to conduct their research in harmony with the legendary tradition."[2] By chance Dr. Gawroñski's assertion remains true also with reference to Chapter I of the NŚ alone. This is so because he yields to a common temptation and combines the account of Chapter I with that of Chapter IV and apparently with that given in *Nandikeśvara's Abhinayadarpaṇa*.[3] Concluding his inquiry into the origin of Indian drama, Gawroñski repeats that modern research corroborated the legend in almost all details, though, of course, explains them differently.[4] Which details had Gawroñski in mind in writing these words? "First of all, he says,

[1] *Bhārtīya Nāṭya Paraṁpara*, p. 42.

[2] Gawroñski, *PDI*, p. 9-10.

[3] *op. cit*, p. 9, he says that Viṣṇu helped Brahmā in creation of *Nāṭya* by the fact that with the help of *gopis* belonging to his retinue in his Kṛṣṇa incarnation *lāsya* dance was propagated on the earth.

[4] *op. cit*, p. 52-3.

we have in it (the legend) one important detail i.e., that drama developed from dances executed through the initiative of great gods...Further there is an unshakable fact there that drama was related to the mystery plays of the Kṛṣṇa-cult.[1] In one of the verses of NŚ defining *Nāṭya*[2] and in the fact that drama was accessible to Śūdras, Gawroński sees the proof of its secular origin. Further, he asserts that the same legend corroborates in detail that singing and epic tales were the components of the primitive drama.[3] *Bhāratī vṛtti* in the eyes of the author proves that the *bhāratas* who originally were rhapsodists reciting epic tales, only later began to associate with *naṭas* and *Nāṭya* and the word *bhārata* came to denote actors in general.[4] The second conclusion concerning the connections of *Nāṭya* with the Kṛṣṇa-cult will not, however, find support in the account of Chapter I of NŚ. All the other remarks are warranted by it and show that the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend reflects to some extent the actual process of making of *Nāṭya*, or reflects its structure. We may criticise Dr. Gawroński for certain of his views. Nevertheless it seems that his general approach is correct. It is most natural to expect from the mythological account of a creation some hints about the character of that creation. So long as we do not go further than this, we are on perfectly safe ground.

Last, but not least, Professor Gonda's opinion constitutes in itself a new category of interpretation of the mythology of *Nāṭya*. He views the elements of mythology and of ritual which NŚ contains against a broad background of the complex cultural identity of the primitive society. This is necessitated by the fact of a close interconnection of different aspects of the social life of that society. Professor Gonda says, for instance, that "the object of art is in a primitive society always an object of religious life."[5] Further, in his treatment of the subject Prof. Gonda attaches great importance to the Indramaha Festival, about which he says: "the erection of Indra's

[1] Gawroński, *PDI*.

[2] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 119, "*yo'yam svabhāvo lokasya sukhaduḥkhasamanvitaḥ, so'ṅgādyabhinayopeto nāṭyam ity abhidhīyate*"

[3] Gawroński, *PDI*, p. 53.

[4] *Ibid.* and p. 38-41.

[5] Gonda, *FUWID*, p. 354.

tree in the *pūrvaraṅga* demonstrates the close connection of the oldest Indian drama with this festival. In any case one can say that it is one of the roots of the classical drama."[1] The whole mythology of *Nāṭya* with its central event of Indramaha is termed by Prof. Gonda "*an* '*Aition*' which ascribes to the gods the institution of the custom of the erection of Indra's standard; makes it into a myth and thus enhances the effect of this custom."[2] The most interesting aspect of Prof. Gonda's approach, however, is his admission that both mythology and ritual are, in a way, subservient to magic. The gist of his position is that "the demons through the quasi magical action of the 'drama' i.e., through the quasi magical action of the victory of the gods, lost in reality their strength and were cast down."[3] Thus it appears, from what Prof. Gonda says, that the mythology and the ritual of *Nāṭya* reflect a tendency of the primitive Indian society to consider their theatre as a weapon of magic serving men in their confrontations with the evil spirits. This is further supported by Prof. Gonda when he holds that the actions of the ritual of *Nāṭya* are of a kind similar to the actions of the Vedic sacrifice,[4] as also by his opinion that "originally the point of gravity was in *pūrvaraṅga*—a centre of the magic religious feast to which 'a dramatic' representation belonged."[5] Prof. Gonda's observations carry great weight and are difficult to contest. We accept his contentions with respect to the importance of Indramaha and with respect to the magical implications of *Nāṭya's* mythology and ritual. Yet we feel that these contentions neither fully explain all the details of that mythology, nor take a complete account of its intellectual background, peculiar to ancient India at that time.

The above review indicates that there are five distinct approaches to the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*. The first, represented by Abhinavagupta, can be termed traditional. According to it the mythological account of the origin of theatre describes real happenings, although their nature is different from the nature of those which accompany the creative activity of man. The second

[1] Gonda, *FUWID*, p. 369.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 443.
[3] *op. cit*, p. 442.
[4] *op. cit*, p. 443.
[5] *op. cit*, p. 366.

approach may be called historical. It makes a modest start taking the legend for an effort to win the authority of the gods and the Vedas for *Nāṭya* (Keith). But later it attempts to discover a concrete historical background for that effort (Ghosh, Shekhar). Finally it claims that the account is a veiled history but fails to substantiate this claim, straying into the related field of the structural development of *Nāṭya* (Varma, Jagirdar). The third approach takes the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti* for a description of the theatrical art in general (Singh): and the fourth, which is similar, understands that account as reflecting the structure and character of *Nāṭya* (Gawroński). Finally the fifth approach takes the mythology of *Nāṭya* for a testimony of the ritualistic and magical significance of the early Indian theatre (Gonda).[1]

We ourselves basically share the point of view of Dr. C.P. Singh. We also take Chapter I of NŚ for a general description of the theatrical art, or rather we take it for a definition of that art bearing the features of an early philosophical enquiry. This is because we understand mythology in general as a type of language used by man during certain periods of his cultural history to analyse and describe the phenomena surrounding him. This contention receives strong support in the form of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. Much of the mythological language of the Brāhmaṇas borders on philosophy, which is its younger sister. A lot of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads is expressed in terms of mythological or semi-mythological events. In both the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads mythology often serves as an illustration for philosophical formulations and is always a convenient medium for philosophy. Our position would propose the following recasting of Jagirdar's remark: By tracing any phenomenon to the gods and their world and by

[1] Many other scholars dealing with the ancient Indian theatre give their views regarding the first Chapter of NŚ. (Upadhyaya, Bharatiya, Bhatt, I. Singh, D. Ojha, G.T. Deshpande, S.R. Chaturvedi, M. Winternitz, H.N. Dasgupta, K.P. Kulkarni, M.R. Anand. For particulars see Bibliography). These views in most cases are too brief to give us any idea as to what approach among these mentioned above their authors would share. Besides in a good many cases the authors simply confess their inability to cmprehend the legend (Dasgupta-De, C.B. Gupta, A.C. Vidyabhusan).

showing how that phenomenon fares in the world of the gods, the old sages enunciated a theory or an outlook. In this form Jagirdar's remark expresses our own point of view. The mythology of NŚ, in our own opinion, is the equivalent of the abstract philosophical enquiry of later times. In order to comprehend the ideas which it conveys we have to define-precisely the character of this mythology, that is to say, we have to find out what period in the history of mythology the *Nāṭyotpatti* account belongs to. But before we begin this enquiry, we have to establish the limits of time imposed on us by the existence of *Nāṭya*. This problem can for practical purposes be reduced to one question,viz. how far back can we look for the sources of the NŚ's mythology without being confronted with the lack of any shred of evidence of the then existence of *Nāṭya*.

2

EARLY CHRONOLOGY OF NĀṬYA

We owe to Dr. Keith one of the most cautious assessments of the age of *Nāṭya*. It is for this reason that we shall make the opinion of Dr. Keith our starting point. According to him the oldest fully reliable evidence of the existence of *Nāṭya* is the testimony of Patañjali (140 BC)[1] For NŚ, which is the earliest known treatise on *Nāṭya*, he allows the third century AD.[2] The oldest dramatist, it seems, is according to him Aśvaghoṣa whom he discusses first.[3] We could undoubtedly accept Dr. Keith's opinion unconditionally provided the testimony of Pāṇini (*circa* 400 BC) did not exist. His mention of the Naṭa-sūtras, *naṭas* and *nāṭya* is well known.[4] Dr. Keith is correct when he says that we do not have any other contemporary evidence which would prove beyond doubt that *naṭa* meant an actor. Therefore, "the only legitimate conclusion is that these rules (Naṭa-sūtras) were laid down for the guidance of dancers or, perhaps, pantomimes..."[5] Dr. Keith overlooked one aspect of the problem. Namely, that as we do not have any definite contemporary proof that *naṭa* denotes an actor, equally, we do not have any direct evidence that the term *naṭa* meant a dancer or a mime. It is only the linguistic derivation of it from the root *nṛt* and the general fact of the existence of dance that is brought forth in this connection. A linguistic derivation alone cannot suffice, especially, when we have at the same time a similar derivation of the word *nartaka*. The second argument

[1] Keith, *SD*, p. 31.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 13.
[3] *op. cit*, p. 80.
[4] Agrawala, *IP*, p. 338-9.
[5] Keith, *SD*, p. 290.

would become valid only if a *naṭa* was actually spoken of as dancing. Dr. Keith's assertion appears to be that of a minimalist—an approach otherwise commendable. Yet, here the problem is too complicated to be dismissed with a simple statement that 'if there is no evidence that *naṭa* was an actor then let him be a dancer or a mime.' In certain more or less obvious cases it is better to look first for negative evidence before discarding this or that meaning of a word or a passage as unreliable. Only if we find conclusive negative evidence that, for instance, the word 'singing' in a text does not mean singing a song but humming a tune, can we discard the generally accepted meaning of the word 'singer' and translate it as one who hums. If such evidence is missing it will certainly be more prudent to accept a common connotation of a word. In the case of *naṭa* we neither have convincing positive nor yet negative evidence. Let us therefore see whether we can marshal sufficient arguments to show that we shall be on the safer side in accepting the later universal meaning of *naṭa* as an actor. The first argument against understanding that word as denoting a dancer is the simultaneous[1] existence of the word *nartaka* meaning a dancer exclusively, and derived from the same root. Yet in justice it must be noted that synonyms are not a rarity. Should this word then be understood as a pantomime? It can hardly be so, since we equally do not have any positive proof of the existence of a pantomime. On the other hand we have numerous indications that the term *naṭa* can signify an actor with much more chance of being correct. Without overestimating the fact we can say that the universal meaning of this word as an actor, since Patañjali to this day[2] is not mere trifling evidence. Another interesting argument is furnished by the passages of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Dr. Keith does not consider the testimony of the epics reliable.[3] Yet, since the passages in question mention *naṭas* that spoke and *nāṭakas* that were recited and belong to the older portion of *Rāmāyaṇa*, they deserve attention.[4] Further, many authorities

[1] Both words appear together in two verses of *Rāmāyaṇa* (II, 6, 14; II 67, 15) quoted by Gawroński (*PDI*, p. 28-9).

[2] The actors of *Kūṭiyaṭṭam*, the Sanskrit theatre of Kerala, call themselves *naṭas*.

[3] Keith, *SD*, p. 29.

[4] Gawroński, *PDI*, p. 28 (R. 11, 6, 14; R. 11, 69, 4).

agree that NŚ was preceded by works of *sūtra* and *bhāṣya* style. Even if we do not accept in detail any of the theories forwarded by Dr. Varma,[1] Dr. Das Gupta,[2] or Dr. De,[3] *et al.*, we shall still have to admit that a sophisticated theatre, with theoretical manuals, was known to the last two centuries BC. Therefore Dr. Keith's opinion that it is only a primitive form of drama, the existence of which we can accept in Patañjali's time,[4] seems no longer final. The very existence of Naṭa-sūtras implies the existence of a well developed art of those *naṭas*. As *Aṣṭādhyāyī* itself indicates, language was a well-known subject, traditionally theoretically studied. In such circumstances, we do not see any exaggerated optimism in believing that those *naṭas* were not merely dumb performers. Here Dr. Keith stresses the fact of difference between *naṭas* of Pāṇini and those of NŚ.[5] He points to the fact that Śilālin and Kṛśāśva, the authors of the *sūtras* mentioned by Pāṇini (iv, 3, 110 & 111), are ignored by NŚ. The omission in NŚ puzzled also Dr. Ghosh, who suggests the following explanation: first of all, an unfriendly atmosphere towards theatre, dividing Naṭa-sūtras from NŚ; secondly, the fact that disappearance of works and authors is not a rare phenomenon in Indian literary history; and thirdly, the possibility of professional jealousy to a rival school.[6] In the light of these arguments the assertion of Dr. Keith becomes less irrevocable—the more so that Amarasiṁha (V century AD.) "gives *śilālins*, *kṛśāśvins* and some other words as synonyms."[7] If it is not an automatic following of Pāṇini but a reflection of popular usage, then we shall have in it an evidence of some continuance of that tradition set out by Naṭa-sūtras of Kṛśāśva and Śilālin. It will not be out of place to note at the end of our remarks that referring to NŚ and Naṭa-sūtras one should never risk a comparison between Bharata on the one hand and Kṛśāśva and Śilālin on the other, first of all, because we

[1] Varma, *SWB*, p. 84 ff.

[2] Dasgupta & De, *HSL*, p. 640.

[3] De, *HSP*, p. 31.

[4] Keith, *SD*, p. 37.

[5] *op. cit*, pp. 290. Prof. Gonda (*FUWID*, p. 332-3) takes the Naṭa-sūtras for the precursors of NŚ and gives the word 'Künstler' (artist) as the equivalent of the word *naṭa* thus obviously disagreeing with Dr. Keith.

[6] MM Ghosh, Problems of the Nāṭyaśāstra, *IHQ*, VI, 1930, p. 75.

[7] Varma, *SWB*, p. 89.

know nothing about those two and secondly because there exists a great possibility that Bharata, a sage might have been known to the authors of Naṭa-sūtras. (We shall return to this question later.) Thus, it may be that while in the case of NŚ we are in possession of the text but lack its human author's name, with the Naṭa-sūtras it may be the other way round. This remark does not even claim to be a hypothesis. We simply feel that the utmost caution is here advisable since Bharata had all the qualifications of a mythological figure and the legend even according to Dr. Keith might well have existed earlier than the actual text of NŚ.[1]

None of the above remarks claim to offer conclusive evidence for the existence of *Nāṭya* before Pāṇini. They are far from being sufficiently convincing. Our only aim has been to show that there is nothing incorrect or superlative in admitting a strong probability of its existence at that time. We believe that a careful enquiry into the text of NŚ can bring forward still further material supporting our view and extending the antiquity of *Nāṭya* towards the times of Pāṇini. In what follows we shall submit some material of that description furnished by a study of the mythology of Chapter I of NŚ.

[1] Keith, *SD*, p. 13.

3

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE NĀṬYOTPATTI ADHYĀYA OF NŚ

At first glance the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* immediately tells us that, at the most, there can be only three claimants to this mythology, *i.e.*, two sectarian trends of Vāiṣṇavism and Śāivism, and the Brāhmaṇical or sacrificial. We shall first investigate the claims of the Vāiṣṇava and Śāiva trends.

Of the two great deities Viṣṇu seems to have less to say in the field of *Nāṭya* than Śiva. This impression we get mainly because of the account found in Chapter XXII, where Viṣṇu is credited with the creation of four *vṛttis*—a rather marginal contribution to *Nāṭya* in comparison with Śiva's dance. In chapter I Viṣṇu is also overshadowed by Śiva. He is mentioned there for the first time only as having contributed a throne to the ensemble.[1] Here he is the seventh in order giving way to such gods as Indra, Brahmā, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Śiva, and Vāyu. The second and last time he appears as residing in the third section of Indra's weapon—the *jarjara*.[2] It is difficult to argue that the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti* owes anything to Vāiṣṇavism seeing the highest deity of that denomination of Hinduism in such an inferior position. The story of Chapter XXII does not change this view, since in all probability it "was an afterthought, and may be due to Viṣṇu's connection with drama at a later stage. For if he had any original connection with drama, he might well have appeared in the first legend, which also men-

[1] *NŚ*, *GOS*, I, 61.
[2] *op. cit*, 93.

tions the Styles."[1] Besides that, we should always remember that the legend of the first *adhyāya* is complete, so that all other stories to be found in NŚ should be considered separately, the more so, since the entire text of NŚ bears definite marks of a gradual interpolation and recasting.[2] It is clear that Viṣṇu and his believers cannot claim any significant contribution to *Nāṭya* at least in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend. Let us then have a closer look at the position Śiva occupies in Chapter I of NŚ. Śiva appears for the first time[3] under his name Nīlakaṇṭha when the inclusion in *Nāṭya* of the *Kāiśikī* style and dance is discussed.[4] In contradistinction to the privileged position which he occupies in the legend of Chapter IV, here he is ignored by Brahmā and it is only because Bharata once saw him dancing that he (Bharata) thought of including the *Kāiśikī* style and dance into *Nāṭya.* The second time Śiva is mentioned by his proper name as contributing success to the ensemble.[5] Here he is the fifth in order, giving way to Indra, Brahmā, Varuṇa and Sūrya. The third time Śiva is mentioned as Śaṅkara residing in the second section of the *jarjara.*[6] The last time, he is mentioned under his name Hara as protecting the minor characters of a play.[7] Besides on the occasion of appointing gods to guard the theatre-hall, Brahmā places Śiva's pike (śūla) in the top of the door.[8] By all means the strongest claim of Śiva to an elevated position in the legend of *Nāṭyotpatti* is his presence under the appellation of Maheśvara in the invocation of the *adhyāya.* There he finds himself in the most unusual company of Brahmā. This impressed Dr. Ghosh so much that he wrote,—"Salutation to Śiva along with Brahman is very rare in Indian literature."[9] Dr. Ghosh was not the first who felt that something is amiss in that invocation: we have already seen how Abhinavagupta refused to comment on the absence of Viṣṇu from it, his argument indicating rather his consternation than any serious scientific

[1] Ghosh, *CHHD*, p. 5.

[2] De, *SP*, p. 19.

[3] His appearance in the first stanza we shall discuss later.

[4] *NŚ*, *GOS*, I, 45.

[5] *op. cit*, 60.

[6] *NŚ*, *GOS*, I, 93.

[7] *op. cit*, 97.

[8] *op. cit*, 89.

[9] *NŚ*, *MMG*, p. 1, fn 2.

objection (see p. 3). Certainly he felt that something is not altogether proper in invoking Brahmā and Śiva without their third counterpart Viṣṇu. The problem becomes still more complicated because, although Śiva has more say in the legend than Viṣṇu, yet his role there hardly qualifies him for the honour of being mentioned in the invocation. The account of Chapter IV cannot be taken as the cause of that privilege for the same reason as we have discarded the account concerning Viṣṇu. The account concerning Śiva is even a more obvious repetition with sectarian motives of the events of Chapter I than that concerning Viṣṇu.[1] Inevitably therefore we have to ask whether Śiva should not share the fate of Viṣṇu in not being mentioned in the invocation. To answer this we have to ask two further questions. First, whether the appellation 'Maheśvara' can denote any other deity. Secondly whether any other deity mentioned in the *Nāṭyotpatti Adhyāya* is better than Śiva qualified for that distinction. The answer to the second question is not difficult. Certainly Indra's role in the creation and preservation of *Nāṭya* puts into the shade everything achieved in the *Nāṭyotpatti* by Śiva. The first of our two questions has to be modified now. It should run as follows: do we have any evidence that Indra was called 'Mahevara'? Many factors indicate that such a possibility exists. We know that only too often Vedic gods were bestowing their names and achievements on Viṣṇu and Śiva, the powerful contenders for lordship over the Indian pantheon. Especially outspoken in this context is the later epic mythology. Hopkins multiplies examples when the names of all gods, such as different names of Brahmā (NB. including Pitāmaha), were appropriated by Viṣṇu and Śiva[2]. The same happens to many of Indra's exploits[3] and names, among which we find the appelation 'Maheśvara'.[4] This name is shared by Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu), Rudra and Śiva.[5] But

[1] Varma, *SWB*, p. 126.

[2] Hopkins, *EM*, p. 192.

[3] Sorensen, *IN. MBh*, p. 328 mentions Indra changing himself into wind and mixing the clothes of bathing maidens., p. 331 slaying of Namuci—both feats appropriated later by Kṛṣṇa—Viṣṇu, pp. 332, 3, 5, Śiva as Śakra., p. 338 Nārāyaṇa identified with Indra.

[4] Hopkins, *EM*, p. 122-3.

[5] see Sorensen, *IN.MBh*.

one of the earliest claimants to it seems to be Indra. Hopkins writes that "some grandiose namés of Śiva are the epithets of other gods. Maheśvara is Indra in I, 211, 23, where Śiva becomes four-faced through staring at Tilottamā; and in I, 227, 19, *Tridaśānāṁ maheśvaraḥ* is also Indra."[1] Thus we see that both gods are mentioned together while Indra is still known as Maheśvara—a situation similar to that in NŚ. Consequently it seems certain that the Maheśvara of NŚ is Indra and not Śiva. This interpretation not only explains that unusual proximity of Pitāmaha and Maheśvara but it is also far more adequate to all the later events described in which in effect there are only four main actors, *i.e.*, Brahmā, Indra, Bharata, and Virūpākṣa—the chief of the demons.[2] From these arguments we can clearly conclude that, since Viṣṇu cannot claim any credit for the creation of *Nāṭya*, in the similar way Śiva has just enough title according to the legend to be counted (among many contributors to *Nāṭya*) ahead of Viṣṇu but behind Brahmā, Indra and other Vedic gods. This conclusion may be almost automatically followed by another, namely that the account in question is older than Viṣṇu and Śiva cults in their sectarian form.[3]

A standard chronology of Indian mythology is given by Dr. Keith.[4] The Hindu mythology which interests us here is divided into four stages: Vedic, Brāhmaṇic, Epic, and Purāṇic. Their dating, of course, corresponds to the dating of their literary sources. We can dismiss outright any possibility that the mythological account of Chapter I remains in close relationship with the pure Vedic mythology. The reason for this is the importance, in the creation of *Nāṭya*, enjoyed by Brahmā, a

[1] Hopkins, *EM*, p. 220.

[2] *NŚ*, *MMG*, p. 14 footnote of Dr. Ghosh writes that the name of Virūpākṣa occurs in R. and MBh. and in some Purāṇas, but none can be identified with V. of NŚ. It is a mistake. *MBh.* (vide Sorensen) and Purāṇas (vide Dikshitar) mention Virūpākṣa as a demon, a son of Danu.

[3] Bhandarkar in *VS* and *MRS* suggests the early part of the second century BC. as the time when Vasudeva was already worshipped as the god of gods and his worshippers were called Bhāgavatas (p. 45). But in general the worship of Vasudeva has to be regarded as old as Pāṇini (p. 4). The worship of Śiva according to the same authority acquires sectarian features around the time of Patañjali (p. 164).

[4] Keith, *MAR* (*I*).

personal god who in the Veda is known only as the 'prayer' or the 'spell'.[1] Besides, some of the deities like Śiva are not to be found there. Also the idea of *yugas* is absent from the Ṛgveda. Other reasons can be cited but this is hardly necessary since the general style of the legend does not betray any direct Vedic influence and to push *Nāṭya* so far back in time would be untenable. Let us now examine the chances at the other extreme, i.e., is there a possibility of this mythological account being a product of the Purāṇic age? Dr. Keith is of the opinion that "no Purāṇa antedates 600 AD."[2] "The most noteworthy feature of the Purāṇic mythology is the deepening of the sectarianism of the worship of the two great gods."[3] Both the date and the character of the mythology of the extant Purāṇas place them well outside our field of interest.[4] Yet, at the same time, we should remember that the Purāṇic tradition is already known to the Brāhmaṇas.[5] Dr. Dikshitar rightly insists that "some Purāṇas were in existence in the time of the Atharvaveda.[6] If we remember also that works of the Purāṇa class were known to NŚ,[7] then we cannot lightly dismiss the possibility of the legend's dependance on the Purāṇas. At least it is certain that there must have been some earlier works of this type similar in antiquity to the Brāhmaṇas and the epics. But since these works are not available and since in general "there is no essential difference between the mythology of the Purāṇas and the mythology of the epics",[8] we can safely direct our attention towards the epics in order to identify the mythology of NŚ. According to Dr. Keith the worship of Śiva and Viṣṇu "is sectarian as early as the epics, in the latest part of which there is free use of language which goes as far as anything in the Purāṇas, but there is a difference in degree in the devotion

1 Keith, *MAR (I)*, p. 78.

2 *op. cit*, p. 13.

3 *op. cit*, p. 162.

4 Only for two epithets of Brahmā, Oṁkāra and Vibhu and for Saptadvīpa we have to look into Purāṇas since they are absent from the epics (vide Sorensen and Hopkins *EM*). Besides those, some other names are absent in the epics but neither are they mentioned by Dikshitar.

5 Mcdonell, *HSL* p. 251.

6 Dikshitar, *PI*, p. XIII.

7 Kane, *HSP*, p. 6 and 29 (*NŚ*, *GOS*. 14, 46. *NŚ*, *KM*, 13, 46)

8 Keith, *MAR (I)*, p. 162.

when the main body of the epic is compared with these poems..."[1] Dr. Hopkins presents a similar view. He writes that MBh. "in its latest growth is on a par with the earlier Purāṇas, but it is not so advanced in sectarianism as even the oldest of these writings."[2] Both scholars stress that it was its latest part in which a sectarianism of the Purāṇic type appeared. It seems, therefore, that MBh. depicts some important changes in the character of worship which have taken place in the period of time when it was being composed. Here we share the supposition of Dr. Hopkins, who comments that "it is to the epic that one must turn to study the budding and gradual flowering of the modern religions which have cast strict orthodoxy into the shade."[3] Thus we see that our general remarks point unmistakably to the earlier epic period as that which could be responsible for the mythological account of the creation of *Nāṭya*. In this light we shall discuss the characteristic features of the main gods appearing in that account. In the course of our discussion we shall also consider the relation of the *Nāṭyotpatti* mythology to that of the Brāhmaṇas.

So far we have pointed out only negative arguments supporting our view, i.e., the absence of Viṣṇu and Śiva in their later sectarian glory from the story of the creation of theatre. Positive arguments also are not lacking. One of the most interesting point is furnished by the position that Brahmā holds in our story, where he is mentioned thirty-four times and where undoubtedly he is an unchallenged sovereign. When the brahman of the Ṛgveda—writes Dr. Keith—"is converted into the subject of asceticism, it is clear that it is assuming the feature of Prajāpati, and that two distinct lines of thought are converging into one. The full result of this process is the creation of a new god, Brahmā, which is the masculine of the neuter impersonal Brahman. Yet this new deity is not an early figure, he is found in later Brāhmaṇas, such as the Kauṣītaki and the Tāittiriya, as well as in the Upaniṣads and the still later Sūtra literature, in which he is clearly identified with Prajāpati, whose double, however, obviously he is. Was there, as has been suggested,

[1] Keith, *MAR* (*I*), p. 162.
[2] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 350.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 349.

ever a time when Brahmā was a deity greater than all the others in the pantheon? The answer certainly cannot be in unrestricted affirmative, for the epic shows no trace of a time when Brahmā was a chief god; and the evidence of the Buddhist Sūtras, which undoubtedly make much of Brahmā Sahāmpati (an epithet of uncertain sense), is not enough to do more than indicate that in the circles in which Buddhism found its origin Brahmā had become a leading figure. It is, in fact, not unlikely that in the period of the close of the age of the Brāhmaṇas, just before the appearance of Buddhism, the popular form of the philosophic god had made some progress towards acceptability, at least in the circles of warriors and the Brāhmaṇas. But if this were the case, it is clear that this superiority was not to be of long duration, and certainly it never spread among the people as a whole."[1] In the above passage Dr. Keith said that the epic shows no trace of a time when Brahmā was a chief god. Yet, further, Dr. Keith stresses that "beside Śiva and Viṣṇu no Vedic god takes equal rank, and the only power which can for a moment be compared with these two deities is Brahmā, the personal form of the absolute Brahman, a god that is to say of priestly origin and one who could never have had any real hold on the mythological instinct."[2] We see that although Brahmā is not a chief god in the epic yet he "is in his place merely because in the preceding age he was the highest god;..."[3]. Furthermore, according to Hopkins, in all cases in MBh. in which "Viṣṇu or Śiva appears 'below' Brahmā...this condition of affairs is recorded not in the epic proper but in the Brāhmaṇic portions of the pseudo-epic, or in ancient legends alone."[4] Therefore we can conclude by quoting Dr. Keith once more: he writes that in the epic "...Brahmā shows some of the features of the greatness of a creator...but he yields in importance to the two great gods Śiva and Viṣṇu,"[5] who according to Hopkins are superimposed upon the older worship of Brahmā.[6] As we have already mentioned Brahmā's sovereignty in the mythology

[1] Keith, *MAR* (*I*), p, 78.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 107.
[3] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 405.
[4] *op. cit*, p. 408.
[5] Keith, *MAR* (*I*), p. 109.
[6] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 389.

of Chapter I of NŚ goes unchallenged. The nearest to him is Indra who waits on him with folded palms.[1] Brahmā like Prajāpati is said to be the father of both the Devas and Dāityas,[2] he is all-knowing,[3] an epithet refused to him in the epic proper.[4] Finally, Brahmā through his creative agency, Viśvakarman, brings to existence a theatre-hall[5] thus making his creation complete and fulfilling his obligation in the last resort when even the king of gods, Indra himself, fails.[6] Such an elevated position for Brahmā who is invoked in the opening stanza of the treatise could hardly be conceivable later than those "Brāhmaṇic portions of the pseudo-epic or ancient legends", i.e., the earliest epic period still under the strong sway of Brāhmaṇical thought. Suggesting this period for this legend we have a far easier task than that which faced Dr. L.Ū. Schroeder. He, on the strength of the fact that Brahmā sometimes appears in the epic as a god superior to Viṣṇu, tried to prove that in fact throughout MBh. Brahmā is a chief god and, therefore, we should date that text as composed between the seventh Century BC and the fourth Century BC, because at that time Brahmā was a chief god.[7] In the case of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* the priority of Brahmā is beyond question.

Another deity interesting us from that point of view is Indra. Mentioned in mythological account of NŚ seventeen times, he occupies a position inferior only to Brahmā. This position of Indra as Brahmā's favoured son or younger brother is noted in the early epic but loses ground with the growth of the sectarian gods.[8] Indra's participation in multiple wars and skirmishes with demons is a very general factor recognized from the Ṛgveda up to the Purāṇas. It cannot therefore be of help to us in determining the character of this god as belonging to this or that particular period. Yet the mode of his engagement against demons in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend is meaningful. It calls to mind

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 21.
[2] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 104.
[3] *op. cit*, 18.
[4] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 409.
[5] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 79.
[6] *op. cit*, 76.
[7] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 408.
[8] Hopkins, *EM*, p. 140-1.

his similar engagement in defence of sacrifice described in the Brāhmaṇas. "For at that time when the gods were setting out to spread the sacrifice, the Rakshasas, the fiends, sought to smite them, saying, 'Ye shall not sacrifice. Ye shall not spread the sacrifice'.[1] This threat was counteracted by the gods. "Now once upon a time the gods while performing sacrifice, were afraid of an attack from the Asura-Rakshasas. They said 'Who of us shall sit on the South side, we will then enter upon the sacrifice on the North side, in a place free from danger and injury.' They said to Indra, 'Verily, thou art the strongest of us; sit thou on the South side...".[2] "Now when the gods drove away Asura-Rakshasas, they could not drive those two; but whatever (sacrificial) work the gods performed that these two disturbed, and then quickly fled."[3] Finally the gods resorted to an intrigue to free their sacrifice and bribed the demons. In NŚ they used nobler means—persuasion, although they were also ready to offer gifts.[4] The events collected here are taken out of their context. It is not our purpose to prove that exactly the same sequence of events had already been described in the Brāhmaṇas: nor do we want to suggest that the author of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* copied history from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.* Our sole aim is to prove that only an author thoroughly conversant with the atmosphere and style of the Brāhmaṇas could possibly have created an account of a type so similar to that of the Brāmaṇas, and invested Indra with such a 'Brāhmaṇic' role. Another non-epic feature of Indra's personality is his association with Viṣṇu. We have already noted that Viṣṇu is twice mentioned in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend—once as giving a throne to the troupe and once as residing in the jarjara—Indra's weapon. Dr. Gonda quotes a passage from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* according to which Viṣṇu has a share in the construction of the *vajra.* "One constructs the bolt; one makes the Agni the *anīka*—"point", Soma the *śalya*—"shaft or socket" and Viṣṇu the *kulmala*—"this part of the implement by which the point is attached to the shaft."[5] The relevant portion of the

[1] *ŚB*, VII, 3, 2, 5.
[2] *op. cit*, IV, 6, 6, 1-6.
[3] *op. cit*, IV, 2, 1, 5-6; the two are demons Śaṇḍa and Marka.
[4] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 100.
[5] Gonda, *AEV*, p. 35 quotes *ŚB*, 3, 4, 4, 14.

text of NŚ runs as follows: "In the *Jarjara* was posted Thunder (*vajra*), the destroyer of Daityas, and in its sections were stationed the best and powerful gods. In the topmost section was placed Brahman, in the second Śiva, in the third Viṣṇu, in the fourth Kārtikeya and in the fifth great Nāgas such as Śeṣa, Vāsuki and Takṣaka."[1] One cannot miss the differences here which point, first, to a lesser antiquity of this account and secondly anticipate or mark the advent of the epic period. Important from our point of view is the equation of *jarjara* with *vajra* and the correspondence of the two first deities. Next to Indra Agni is the most important in the Ṛgveda. It is Brahmā in the account of NŚ. In the Ṛgveda Soma is the second in importance. In the account of NŚ it may be Śiva, since he is mentioned four times, *i.e.*, more than any other god excluding Brahmā and Indra. Thus, in both cases it seems that the aim was to endow Indra's weapon with the strength of the most powerful gods plus Viṣṇu, the tried friend and assistant of Indra, who in the epic period, after being Indra's assistant and younger brother,assumes a superior position and is called Atīndra (the god who is over Indra).[2] Incidentally the festival of Indramaha is somewhat related to the question of Indra's weapon, since the establishment and adoration of Indra's staff was the central ceremony of that festival. Dr. Hopkins holds that the description of Indramaha given in MBh. (I, 63) belongs to the first period of epics when the worship of Indra was still of preeminence. The Indramaha festival occupies in the legend of the origin of theatre a very prominent place as a specially chosen occasion for the performance.[3] It is difficult to believe that a merely obscure festivity would have been chosen. Therefore, if we accept Dr. Hopkins' opinion we shall have in it an additional argument for assigning this legend to the early epic period.

Commenting upon the example of a benediction given in Chapter V of the NŚ[4] Dr. Raghavan writes that Soma, the

[1] *NŚ. MMG*, p. 13.

[2] Gonda, *AEV*, p. 32 but he argues that Viṣṇu is in *ṚV* more than mere companion; he is equal in power, similar to Indra himself.

[3] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 54.

[4] *NŚ. GOS*, V, 108; "*namo'stu sarvadevebhyo dvijātibhyaḥ śubhaṁ tathā, jitaṁ somena vāi rājñā ārogyam gobhya eva ca*". We decided to

moon, "is specially saluted because it is the guardian deity of the play-house."[1] Certainly there are strong reasons to take Soma for the moon here. "*Nāndīprayoge ' tha kṛte prīto bhavatī candramāḥ*" (*NŚ. GOS*, V, 49), runs the passage which can convince the doubtful. We do not propose to question this identification. Our only suggestion is that its order should be reverted. Soma of the benediction should not be identified with the Candramas of Chapters I and V (NŚ.GOS, I, 84; V, 49) but Candramas should be identified with Soma the King. Our argument is as follows: In the detailed account of the character of the epic Moon-god[2] we find nothing convincing enough to qualify Candramas from among all other gods for the praise in this benediction. On the other hand, the Vedic and Brāhmaṇic identity of this god seems to be the only reasonable cause of his presence there. Soma stimulates the voice. Soma is called the lord of speech, or leader of speech. Last but not least he is called the leader of the poets.[3] This alone makes a good reason for invoking King Soma at the beginning of a play. But before we draw a final conclusion, let us more carefully consider the relation of Soma to the poets and their creative work. The word *kavi* in the RV combines in itself all the three ideas of wisdom, poetic gift and mystic power.[4] It also means one having divine power. *Kāvya*, in its turn, would stand for 'wonderful activities achieved by 'divine power'.[5] "Finally, "it emerges that *kāvya* is a power of deep perception which makes one *kavi*, whereby as a god one could create surprising things and as a man one could be either wise or could create poetry to please both gods and men."[6] Thus, it seems, that

utilise in our deliberations an argument which does not belong to Chapter I of NŚ because of following reasons: the benediction quoted comes from a portion which in all probability is a part of the original text of NŚ (Varma, *SWB*, p. 114); the character of the deity invoked betrays pure Vedic features; the benediction does not represent any story running concurrently to the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend; finally, as a quoted verse it can be of great antiquity.

[1] Raghavan, Vṛttis, p. 27 fn.

[2] Hopkins, *EM*, 44.

[3] Mcdonell, *VM*, p. 109.

[4] Bhave, *SH*, III. p. 50.

[5] *op. cit.* p. 16.

[6] *op. cit.* p. 51.

Soma was invoked in the *nāndī* because "Soma gives a special power of perception and consequent efficiency to create literary or cosmic wonder."[1] Now the intention of NŚ becomes crystal-clear. It invokes a god "who himself is a connisseur in singing and poetry, a *vipra*, a *rebha*, and a *kavi.*".[2] Before the beginning of one of the *kāvyas*, which, after all, according to Renou means in the RV 'the knowledge which rules over the sacrifice,[3] and which is called in another verse of the benediction *ijyā*—a sacrifice pleasing to the gods.[4] All these reasons convince us that it was for them that *Soma vāi rājā*; who bestows special power to create literary or cosmic wonder is invoked in the *nāndī*. At the same time Soma's presence there and his character strongly suggest that Candramas of the Chapter I is Soma, since it is he who is pleased with the benediction praising King Soma.[5]

The next God whose characteristic in NŚ, meagre as it is, does not conform to his epic image, is Varuṇa. This god in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* is said to reside in the space (*ambara*) of the theatre-hall.[6] Beginning with AV, Varuṇa becomes a water-god *par excellence*.[7] His function in NŚ revokes thus his Ṛgvedic character where he is said to abide in the mid-

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *op. cit*, p. 102.

[3] *op. cit*, p. 50.

[4] *NŚ. GOS*, V, 49; all the examples of *nāndīs* can claim considerable antiquity. The fact that they are quoted by NŚ and the character of Soma the King invoked in one of them indicate this. Conspicuous is also the absence of Śiva who later can claim most the *nāndīs* for himself. Therefore, we feel that the word *ijyā* should be understood as 'sacrifice'. Bṛhaddevata, for instance gives *ijyā* which means 'sacrifice' (see Mcdonell *BD*, VI, 72, p. 228) He assigns it to the 5th Century BC. (Mcdonell, *HSL*, p. 236).

[5] *ŚB*, I. 6.3.24 says "The sun, indeed, relates to Agni, and the moon to Soma...". Elsewhere reversing this order it says: "Now this King Soma, the food of the gods is no other than the moon". (1,6.4.5:3.9..1.8;3.9.4.12) Abhinavagupta also identifies Candramas with Soma (*NŚ. GOS*, I. p. 31) Besides it is interesting to note that Soma is repeatedly called the king of the Brāhmiṇs, for in the words of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* "he who sacrifices has Soma as a King (Keith, *RVBr*, p. 117/I. 14 and III.3/) Thus his invocation in the *nāndī* would suggest that the actors were Brāhmiṇs. see Chapter 1 and Chapter 6.

[6] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 85.

[7] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 471; Hopkins, *RI*, p. 154.

heaven.[1] According to the same source he supports both heaven and earth.[2] In spite of the general attitude of the Brāhmaṇas to treat Varuṇa already as a water-god, *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* still holds that the world of Varuṇa is over the sky.[3] According to Hopkins it is only in the last book of the RV that Varuṇa is seen to descend from the heights and thereafter he is a god and husband of waters.[4] Yet his previous quality of a deity of the heavens lingers in the *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* and in NŚ, indicating a considerable antiquity of the mythological account of the latter.

In the mythological account of the origin of theatre, Agni is called Vahni and made protector or guardian of the stage, for the description of which a technical term *vedikā* has been used.[5] The association of Agni with the stage recalls the original meaning of that architectonic term which is a sacrificial altar or ground. This in its turn revokes Agni's Vedic appellation as *vediṣad*.[6] "...radiant Agni who is seated on the altar, and is fond of his station..."[7] says Ṛgveda. "The graceful messenger (of the gods) goes between heaven and earth; sitting (on the altar), and placed before men, he ornaments the spacious chambers (of sacrifice) with his rays, animated by the gods and affluent with wisdom"[8] repeats the same authority and adds "... mighty Agni, stationed on (the altar) the navel of earth..."[9] Later on Agni comes to denote the altar with which it is thought identical.[10] All this seems to be the most logical reason for Agni's appointment in the theatre-hall.

Besides these five chief gods we have a number of other gods and lesser deities, the references to whom also point to their pre-epic allegiance. We have seen that Viṣṇu for instance,

[1] RV. 5.6.13.5. All references to RV refer to Poona edition. The first figure here stands for *maṇḍala*, the second for *anuvāka*, the third for *sūkta* and the fourth for the number of the verse.

[2] *RV*, 8, 5, 11, 10.

[3] Keith, *RBr* (AK), XX-1, p. 457.

[4] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 65.

[5] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 85.

[6] Mcdonell, *VM*. p. 92.

[7] *RV*, 1, 21, 1, 1.

[8] *RV*, 3, 1, 3, 2.

[9] *RV*, 3, 1, 5, 9.

[10] Agrawala, *SVF*, p. 54.

seems to appear in the account of NŚ in his Vedic capacity as the assistant of Indra. Yet this station of his is not unknown to earlier epic either.[1] Sarasvatī as the protectress of a heroine having as her counterpart Indra the patron of a hero reminds of her Vedic association with this god to whom she communicated vigour through speech (vācā).[2] Mitra being mentioned in one line with Varuṇa can as well claim antiquity.[3] There is little in our text which would help us to define precisely the character of such gods as Sūrya and Vāyu. But the Ādityas, Rudras and Maruts betray some pre-epic features.[4] Yet in the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* besides these already mentioned names, we have also some other which can hardly be traced beyond the epic. So far as these are loose names (as Skanda for instance, (*NŚ. GOS*, I, 93),[5] and their part in the story is insignificant we could more or less ignore them as later additions made under the pressure of more and more omnipotent epic-cum-purāṇic tradition. But, there is at least one portion of the text which in spite of its unchallenged epic character seems to be an integral part of the story. The three *ślokas* (*NŚ. GOS*, I, 8, 9, 10) give a description of time when Indra approached Brahmā asking for the creation of *Nāṭya*. "O Brāhmiṇs, in the days of yore when the Golden Age (Kṛtayuga) passed with the reign of Svāyambhuva (Manu), and the Silver Age (Tretāyuga) commenced with the career of Vāivasvata Manu, and people became addicted to sensual pleasures, were under the sway of desire and greed, became infatuated with jealousy and anger and (thus) found their happiness mixed with sorrow, and Jambudvīpa protected by the Lokapālas (guardians of the worlds) was full of gods, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and great Uragas (Nāgas), the gods, with Indra (Mahendra) as their head (approached) Brahman and spoke to him, 'we want an object of diversion which must be audible as well as visible."[6] Referring to the concept of *yugas* Dr. Keith writes: "In the epic we find in developed and elaborate form a

1 Hopkins, *EM*, p. 140.
2 Mcdonell, *VM*, p. 87.
3 *NŚ. GOS*, I, 85.
4 *Ibid.*
5 mentioned by Pāṇini; Kane, *HD*, p. 710.
6 *NŚ. MMG*, p. 2-3.

conception which is entirely or at least mainly lacking in the Vedic period .."[1] It is meaningful that Dr. Keith places this remark at the very beginning of the chapter on the mythology of the epics taking it for the most convenient point of distinction. Dr. Keith's caution in this remark was probably dictated to him by the fact which he and Dr. Macdonell mention in their Vedic Index. According to it, "there is no certain reference in the Vedic literature to the four ages, though their names occur as the designation of throws at dice. Four ages Puṣya, Dvāpara, Khārvā and Kṛta are mentioned in late *Ṣadviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* and Dvāpara occurs in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*."[2] Since our account presents this concept in a developed form and since the way it is mentioned in the late Brāhmaṇas differ, we shall have to conclude that this portion of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* could not have been composed earlier than the early epic.[3]

We have already shown our preference for the early epic period as the time when the main framework of our legend came to existence. The character of the deities and especially that of Brahmā and Indra, as well as the inferior position of Viṣṇu and Śiva point unmistakably to the existence of a still strong Brāhmaṇical and Vedic type of worship. On the other hand the conception of *yugas* and few minor deities represent the epic claim on that legend. Judging from the accounts of the Indian mythology given by Macdonell, Hopkins and Keith we can accept for the kernel of the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend around date of 500 BC. suggested by Macdonell as marking the close of the Brāhmaṇic period and the beginning of the epic period.[4]

[1] Keith, *MAR(I)*, p. 103.

[2] Mcdonell and Keith, *VeIn*, p. 193.

[3] It is interesting to compare in this connection following remarks made by F.E. Pargiter, concerning the antiquity of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa. "The prominent notice of the great Vedic god Indra, and of Brahmā the earliest of the post-Vedic gods would indicate a fairly high antiquity for the Purāṇa. Especially for the second section which boldly claims to have issued from Brahmā's mouth equally with the Vedas and thus to stand almost on an equality with them, a honour which none of the other Purāṇas ventures to arrogate for itself. Such an antiquity would also explain the high position assigned to the Sun and Agni, who are also among Chief Vedic gods." Pargiter, *MP*, p. XVI.

[4] Macdonell, *HSL*, p. 171 and p. 233. In order to be on the safer side

This contention agrees perfectly with our belief that the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend might have already been known to the Naṭasūtras mentioned by Pāṇini.[5] This conclusion, of course, does not concern the extant literary form of the legend, which undoubtedly belongs to much later period.

it will be better to broaden that period which according to Keith extends from round 600 BC. ("the close of the age of the Brāhmaṇas just before the appearance of Buddhism") till round 400 BC. ("the beginning of the age of epics"). Keith, *MAR* (*I*), p. 78 and p. 12.

[1] Especially when Dr. Agrawala suggests "that Bharata's NŚ was the product of the dramatic school of Śilālin (NŚ describes *naṭas* as *śāilālakas* and the corresponding Vedic term used by Paṇini is *sāilālinaḥ naṭāḥ*) which originated in the Ṛgvedic cāraṇa founded by the teacher who was also the author of Brāhmaṇa work called Śāilāli Brāhmaṇa cited in the Āpastamba Śrāuta Sūtra VI. 4.7." Agrawala, *IP*, p. 338.

Part II

THEATRE AND SACRIFICE

4

NĀṬYA AND YAJÑA

In the first part of this study we limited ourselves to the consideration of the character and activities of single deities. At that stage we ignored 'a theory', or 'an outlook'—as Jagirdar would say—which the author of the mythological account of the *Nāṭyotpatti* wanted to convey, making these deities act in certain particular way.

In Chapter I of our inquiry we have offered a review of various attempts to interpret this mythological story. None of them as we saw, could claim to be sufficiently comprehensive. From among various utterances to be found in different works dealing with the subject of Indian theatre thesis of S.R. Chaturvedi seems to be worth quoting. The passage runs as follows: "According to our tradition the very Brahmā who governs the creative power of the highest god is the maker of the whole creation. Therefore, it is not surprising if he is called the creater of the *Nāṭyaveda* as well."[1] This lonely statement explains perfectly the role of Brahmā as the creator of *Nāṭya* and would probably satisfy Jagirdar, who wrote that in explaining any phenomenon by tracing it to God the old sages enunciated a theory or an outlook.[2] Unhappily, or happily, the legend of the *Nāṭyotpatti* does not concern only the act of the creation of *Nāṭya* by Brahmā. That legend describes many more events which cannot be properly comprehended if we rest satisfied with Chaturvedi's brief exposition of its outlook. Since this exposi-

[1] Chaturvedi, *ANS*, p. 19.
[2] See Chapter 1.

tion explains only one of the events presented in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*, therefore, we have to look for a theory which would explain all important happenings described there not as a series of unconnected events, but as a chain of actions serving one purpose within a logical scheme.

In the preceding part of our study we concluded that the framework of this legend was in all probability created around the middle of the first millennium BC. That period, as it is universally known, was extremely important in shaping Indian culture. It witnessed the close of the age of the Brāhmaṇas marked by the most sophisticated speculations of the Upaniṣads. Further it was the time when the epic traditions began to acquire their definite shapes. In the field of religion that epoch was characterised by the emergence of the two powerful heresies of Buddhism and Jāinism. The traditional orthodox Brāhmaṇism also did not remain unchanged. Although its pattern, as set out in the Brāhmaṇas, was still definitely predominant amongst the people of the Vedic tradition, yet at the same time the tendencies of re-approachment between *Yajña* and the Vāiṣṇava and Śāiva cults can be noticed. For at that time the followers of Viṣṇu and Śiva made within the Brāhmaṇical fold their first claims of superiority on behalf of their chosen deities anticipating the rise of the Śāiva and Vāiṣṇava cults.

This was the time when our mythological story came into being. As we could already see, its main deities are definitely of the Brāhmaṇic or even of the Vedic description. Although this account betrays in details certain influence of the epic trends, yet there is little doubt about its Brāhmaṇic orthodoxy and its allegiance to the Brāhmaṇical tendency which moulded the myth of the *Nāṭyotpatti*. Thus the key to its comprehension is to be found among the intellectual concepts which dominated the thinking of that epoch and this particular brand of Hinduism.

A. A. Macdonell writes that the Brāhmaṇas "...reflect the spirit of an age in which all intellectual activity is concentrated on the sacrifice, describing its ceremonies, discussing its value, speculating on its origin and significance."[1] The Āraṇyakas on the other hand represent a thought signified by a transference of

Macdonell, *HSL*, p. 171.

values from the actual sacrifices to their symbolic representations and meditation.[1] Finally the Upaniṣads seem to mark a stage when the main interest of sacrifice was transferred from its actual performance in the external world to certain forms of meditation.[2] Or as Glasenapp puts it "the Upaniṣads are the secret 'teachings' which give an exposition of the philosophic sense of the sacrifice."[3] Thus we can see that the sacrifice (with the exception of the Buddhist and Jāina trends) was accepted as a central intellectual concept even as late as the Bhagavadgīta, where it coexists with the Bhāgavata concept of Viṣṇu.[4]

In what follows we shall try to show that the mythological account of the *Nāṭyotpatti* was formulated in the terms of thinking dominated by the idea of *Yajña.*

We have already quoted the opinion of C.P. Singh. According to it "the tradition in which NŚ was written, was born, developed and was purified in the illustrious and splendid surroundings of Vedic philosophy, literature and ritual."[5] Since, as we have seen, the leit-motif of those surroundings was the sacrifice, therefore, before attempting an analysis of the way in which it influenced the theory of the ancient Indian theatre, we shall first try to establish the measure of contact between *Nāṭya* and *Yajña.*

In the last chapter of NŚ its author puts into the mouth of king Nahuṣa the following statement: "I wish this (*Nāṭya*) again to be openly produced on the earth during sacrifices to be done on different days of the moon, so that happy and auspicious situations may arise."[6] Already earlier, in the same chapter, we are told that "on hearing the sound of *Nāndī*, and recitatives, songs and playing of instruments during marriages of all kinds, and sacrifices performed for the prosperity of the kings, ferocious spirits will make themselves scarce."[7] This is so far as the testimony of NŚ goes. On the other hand the presence of an entertainment during sacrifices or in their very

[1] Dasgupta, *HIP*, p. 35.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 37.
[3] Glasenapp, *BB*, p. 47.
[4] *Gīta*, III, 8-16 ; IV. 23-32.
[5] See Chapter 1.
[6] *NŚ. MMG*, XXXVI, 62.
[7] *op. cit*, 55-6.

ritual is well documented beginning with the Yajurveda,[1] down to the Harivaṁśa.[2] Among many scattered references to music, dancing, singing, recitation etc. the most significant and therefore deserving an *in extenso* quotation is the concept of *Śilpas* to be found in the *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa.* Following are the relevant passages: "...the atmosphere is without base of support, verily thus day by day they continue finding support in the *Śilpas.* They are triplets, the *Śilpa* is threefold, dancing, music and singing. Verily thus day by day they continue finding support in them." (XXIX-5) "...moreover the *Śilpas* are accompanied by (Verses) of two feet; therefore, here *Śilpas* are recited, (thinking) 'Let us not depart from the *Śilpas* ... "(XXX—3).[3]

There can be little doubt about the importance of this enunciation for our deliberations. Dancing, music, singing and recitation all are called *Śilpas.* All are the basic elements of theatre-art and all are given a considerable metaphysical importance in the ritual of the sacrifice. In the Āitareya and the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇas* the concept of *Śilpas* is significantly broadened. Since both passages are almost identical, we shall quote here only the first one, which seems to give a fuller version of the same concept. A. Coomaraswamy renders it as follows: "It is in imitation (*anukṛti*) of the angelic (*deva*) works of art (*śilpāni*) that any work of art (*śilpa*) is accomplished (*adhigamyate*) here; for example, a clay elephant, a brazen object, a garment, a gold object, and a mule-chariot are 'works of art'. A work of art (*śilpa*), indeed (*ha*), is accomplished in him who comprehends this. For these (*angelic*) works of art (*śilpāni*, viz. the metrical *śilpa* texts) are an integration of the Self (ātma-saṁskṛti); and by them the sacrificer likewise integrates himself (*ātmānaṁ saṁskurute*) in the mode of rhythm (*chandomaya*)."[4] Thus we are

[1] *YS* (*M*), 30 6.20.

[2] D. Ojha, *Hindi Nāṭaka*, p. 28-9. *Harivaṁṣa*, 91-97 adh.

[3] Keith, *RBr* (*AK*) pp. 522 and 525.

[4] Coomaraswamy, *TNA*, p. 8. ; Keith gives following translation: "They recite the *Śilpas.* These are the works of art of the gods ; in imitation of these works of art here is a work of art accomplished ; an elephant, a goblet, a garment, a gold object, a mule chariot are works of art; a work of art is accomplished in him who knows thus. As to these works of art (Śāstras), the *Śilpas* are perfection of the self ; verily by them the sacrificer perfects himself as composed of the metres. (IV. 27

told that whatever is accomplished in imitation of the angelic works, which as the context shows are nature, deserves the name of *Śilpa*. Now *Nāṭya* is said to be the representation (*anukīrtana*) of the Three Worlds and the imitation (*anukaraṇa*) of the Seven Islands.[1] Therefore *Nāṭya* is nothing else but a Śilpa '*par excellence*.' All this besides proving beyond any reasonable doubt the close relationship of *Nāṭya* to the sacrificial ritual, sheds valuable light on the problem posed by the meaning of the names *sūtradhāra* and *sthāpaka*. These two terms gave rise to an interesting theory forwarded by Pischel. He connects the meaning of these names with the specific nature of a puppet-theatre ; holding (*dhṛ*) strings (*sūtrāṇi*) and placing (*sthāpana*) puppets. The inadequacies of this theory have been clearly shown by Keith and thus the terms in question have been left without a fully plausible explanation.[2] To make up for this lack we suggest the following way of explanation:—*Sūtradhāra*—the stage manager and the director of the troupe shares his name with architects—*śilpins 'par excellence*.' The same may be said about *sthāpaka*—a somewhat shadowy assistant of *sūtradhāra* whose name as *śilpin* means an establisher of an image.[3] Further, *sūtradhāra* was entrusted with the responsibility of erecting a theatre-hall. Now if we remember that all that later became known as *Nāṭya* had earlier been called *Śilpa*[4] and thus placed on the same level with such *śilpas* like image-making and architecture etc., we cannot help concluding that the terms *sūtradhāra* and *sthāpaka* are the relics of those times when the art of theatre or its immediate precursor was known as a *Śilpa* and its exponents as *śilpins* and was closely connected with or even incorporated into the sacrificial ritual. The term *Nāṭya* seems to owe its existence to Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī, where in all probability, it is mentioned for the first time. We can risk the hypothesis that the need of such a term arose when these four elements mentioned

(XXX. 1.)), *RBr* (*AK*), p. 277-8.

[1] *NŚ. GOS.*, I. 107 and 117 *anukṛ* and *anukīrt* seem to be synonymous in NŚ.

[2] Keith, *SD*, p. 52-3. The most satisfactory among those explanations is the one connecting the name of *sūtradhāra* with his function as an architect of the theatre-hall. p. 56-7.

[3] See M. Williams.

[4] M. Williams gives acting as one of the meanings of *śilpa*.

in the *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* as *Śilpas* became more integrated into one whole and probably mingled with some popular entertainment, the exponents of which were called *naṭas*. Thus a new art termed *Nāṭya* was born. That new art finally crystallised shortly before Pāṇini and has in the form of the core of the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend been given a theoretical exposition closely following the ideas attached to the concept of *Śilpas* already present in the Brāhmaṇa literature.[1]

Listing different modes of entertainment provided during a sacrificial session Keith says that mimic combats were one of the items to be witnessed in the Vedic sacrifice.[2] *NŚ* in its turn says that Bharata having learned the art of *Nāṭya* devised by Brahmā "···went to that festival in honour of Indra's victory which took place after the Dānavas and the Asuras (the enemies of the gods) were killed..." and "...devised an imitation of the situation in which the Dāityas were defeated by gods (and), which represented (sometimes) an altercation and tumult and (sometimes) mutual cutting off and piercing (of limbs or bodies)."[3] This part of our mythological story found its way into the consecration of the stage. NŚ says : "Then a fight should be caused to be made on the stage in accompaniment with the sound of all the musical instruments such as conch-shell, *dundubhi*, *mṛdaṅga* and *paṇava*. If the bleeding wounds (resulting from the fight) will be bright and wide, that will be a good omen indicating success."[4] Another element of the same category is exhaustively discussed by Dr. Raghvan, who concluding his enquiry writes: "These show clearly that to begin with *Sāttvati* was the *Vṛtti* in a *Mallayuddha*. Or it may have been a duel with some weapon. For we are led to infer so from the word *Nyāya*, which must not in this connection be taken as righteousness but as the technical

[1] Agrawala, *IP*, p. 338. Dr. Dasgupta holds that *Nāṭya* existed in the time of Pāṇini. This is evident from the fact that Pāṇini himself derived the word in his rule IV. 3. 129. Dasgupta De, *HSL*, p. 644.

[2] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 258.

[3] *NŚ*. *MMG*, p. 9; "*tatas tasmin dhvajamahe nihatāsuradānave|*
tadante' nukṛtir baddhā yathā dāityāḥ surāiḥ jitāḥ||
sampheṭavidravakṛtā cchedyabhedyāhavātmikā|

[4] *NŚ*. *MMG*, p. 43; "*śaṅkhadundubhinirghoṣāir mṛdaṅgapaṇavāis tathā|*
sarvātodyaiḥ praṇaditāi raṅge yuddhāni kārayet||
tattra cchinnaṁ ca bhinnaṁ ca dāritaṁ ca saśoṇitam|
kṣataṁ pradīptam āyastaṁ nimittaṁ siddhilakṣaṇam||

Paribhāṣā of the dramatic world meaning 'wielding of arms', (*śastramokṣaḥ*)."[1] Continuing his remarks Dr. Raghavan points to the association of drama with the Indradhvaja festival and finally says : "Thus fight with and without arms but more especially with arms was being called *Nyāya*. This *Nyāya* was perhaps an entertainment in the ancient festival of Indra's flag. From it as depicting the fight between Devas and Asuras, Drama might have grown."[2]

The above remarks supply us with the following arguments. Firstly, that mimic combats or fights were associated with the sacrifice. Secondly, that the same fights constitute an important element of the ritual of *Nāṭya* and are incorporated into the mythological story of its origin. Thirdly, that both *Nāṭya* and those fights are closely associated with Indra and his festival in the memory of his victory over the demons. We have already established the connection between *Nāṭya* and the sacrificial ritual and pointed to the association of fights with it. It remains, therefore, to find out whether Indra's festival itself is an altogether different problem or, to the contrary, whether it has also some connections with the sacrifice.

Both Indra and the sacrifice belong to the same stock and spring from the same source. Their closest association cannot be negated.[3] It seems natural, therefore, to expect that most of the exploits of that god should be traceable either to the Ṛgveda or to the ritual of the sacrifice. *Dhvajamaha* or *Indramahotsava* seems to belong to this category of events, and as we shall see, there is strong probability that the whole ceremony grew out of the sacrificial ritual.

The problem of *Indramaha*, though undoubtedly important for the early history of *Nāṭya*, has attracted little attention. More than half a century ago Haraprasad Śastri brought in that question and was the first to connect it with the origin of Indian theatre.[4] But neither his comparison of Indra's staff with the

[1] Raghavan, *Vṛttis*, p 40-41.

[2] *op. cit*, p. 42-3; Prof. Gonda quotes *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* as describing Indramaha festival which included wrestling. (*FUWID*, p. 369)

[3] Keith, *RBr* (*AK*), p. 266. "...the sacrifice is connected with Indra..." *KBr*, VI-11 ; "Indra is the ruler of the sacrifice." *SB*, 1.4.1.35 ; 3.4.3.18.

[4] Śastri, *OID*, p. 361 ; Prof. Gonda holds that *Indramaha* is analogical to Maypole for both are fertility rites. (*FUWID*, p. 358)

Maypole of England, nor any other argument sounds convincing. Especially, since he does not tell us anything new about *Indramaha* except what has already been told in NŚ. This is much too little to serve as a basis for any generalisation. Only after almost a quarter of a century Dr. Raghavan, whom we have already quoted deals with the problem of the relationship of the *Indramaha* festival and *Nāṭya*. In this connection Dr. Raghavan observes : "...originally drama started as an item in the flag-festival of Indra and when it outgrew it, the flag-festival itself stuck to drama as necessary warding of obstacles."[1] Looking still further into the past, we shall propose a similar description of the relationship of the *Indramaha* and the sacrificial ritual. Following are our arguments:

"The chanters (of the *Sāma*) hymn thee, Shatakratu ; the reciters of the Rich praise thee, who art worthy of praise ; the Brāhmaṇs raise thee aloft, like a bamboo pole."[2] This seems to be that reference to the *Indramaha* festival to which Dr. Raghavan alludes in his study of Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*.[3] Sāyaṇa explains the passage saying that they have elevated Indra, as tumblers raise a bamboo pole, on the summit of which they balance themselves.[4] For obvious reasons we do not need to consider Sāyaṇa an unmistakable authority.[5] Therefore, we feel free to offer different suggestions. The considerable antiquity of *Indramaha*, the central point of which is the raising of a bamboo pole symbolising Indra, allows us to think that the Ṛgvedic *mantra* quoted above either directly alludes to the by then existent *Indramaha* festival, or may be, concerns some part of the ritual which later became an independent ceremony called *Dhvajamaha.*

Discussing the views of C.P. Singh we mentioned his attempt to identify the *jarjara* of NŚ with the *dūpa*.[6] The basis of that

[1] Raghavan, *Vṛttis*, p. 41 ; Prof. Gonda is of similar opinion. He Writes : "Originally the point of stress was in pūrvaraṅga, center of the magic religious feast to which the 'dramatic' representation belonged." (*FUWID*, p. 366 and 373-4).

[2] *RV*, 1.3.3.1. Keith, *VBYS*, p. 96 (1.6.12).

[3] Raghavan, *BSP*, p. 650.

[4] Wilson, *RV*, I. p. 219.

[5] Ghosh in *IHQ*, vol. X. in "The Nāṭyaśāstra and Abhinava bhāratī" quotes R. Roth as saying that the writings of Sāyaṇa and other commentators must not be an authority to the exegete. Hopkins, *RI*, p. 23.

[6] see Chapter 5.

identification was for him the association of both *jarjara* and *yūpa* with *vajra* which is according to Macdonell the weapon exclusively appropriate to Indra.[1] Yet this should by no means be a decisive argument.[2] For many other things are also identified with a thunderbolt.[3] It is, of course, true that both *jarjara* and *yūpa* are some sort of poles and that both are supposed to keep off obstacles—demons. But this is where the similarity ends. The basic function of *yūpa*—the sacrificial stake, is altogether different from that of Indra's staff which serves solely as a defensive weapon against the demons. It will be, therefore, better to look for some such element in the sacrificial ritual the basic function of which will be comparable to that of *jarjara*.[4]

In his translation of the Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa Dr. W. Caland quotes the following passage of the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (II.150): "At the beginning there were two kinds of the descendants of Prajāpati : the gods and the Asuras...Prajāpati desired 'May the gods come to prosperity and the Asuras perish. He saw this sacrifice, took it unto himself and performed it. At the sacrifice he invited (*upahavyata*) the gods, but, by means of a long bamboo-stick he excluded the Asuras (*dīrghavaṁśenāntargṛhnāt*)... he who has an adversary, he who wishes to practice *abhicāra*, he who contends should perform this sacrifice/*upahavya*/. Those officiating priests who are friendly disposed towards him he should invite, the others he should exclude by means of a long bamboo-stick."[5] The Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa in its turn says that the whole rite was given by Prajāpati to Indra.[6] If we remember one of the very important roles of Indra as the defender of the sacrifice,[7] it will be difficult not to associate both the Ṛgvedic

[1] Macdonell, *VM*, p. 55.

[2] Gonda, *AEV*, p. 81, writes that the sacrificial post is conceived as the Indra tree (*RV*, 3.8.8) thus supporting C.P. Singh.

[3] Water (*ŚB*, 7.2.1.17 etc.), horse (*ŚB*, 2.1.4.16), sun (*ŚB*, 6.3.1.29), fires and altar-bricks (*ŚB*, 7.3.2.5) etc.

[4] The fact that *jarjara* should preferably be made of a bamboo is compared to a bamboo pole and in MBh. account is said to be symbolised by a bamboo pole (Kane, *HDS*, p. 823) seems to be an important element. *Yūpa* does not fulfill the need of the analogy in this respect.

[5] Caland, *PBr*, p. 472.

[6] *op. cit*, p. 473 (XVIII. 1.9.)

[7] *RV*, 1.19.3.6. "Indra...the destroyer of Rākṣasas at (each) venerable (rite)."

mantra and the passage of the Jāiminīya Brāhmaṇa as expressing strikingly similar idea and referring most probably to the same element of the sacrificial ritual. It may be that the following passage of ŚB describes exactly this element of the ritual. "He (the *Adhvaryu*) hands to him (the sacrificer or consecrated) a staff (*daṇḍa*) for driving away the evil spirit—the staff being a thunderbolt...He makes it stand upright with the text 'Stand up, O tree, erect, guard me from injury on to the goal of this sacrifice. Whereby he means to say 'standing erect protect me till the completion of this sacrifice."[1]

Relating the story of the origin of *Indramaha* to be found in MBh. P.V. Kane writes that Indra gave King Uparicara Vasu a bamboo staff as an affectionate gift and in honour of Indra the king planted it in the earth and since that time when the year ended a bamboo-staff was raised by the kings.[2] Since, as we know, Indra not only wields a thunderbolt but also is identified with it,[3] and since a *yajamāna* was usually a king,[4] it will not be untoward to admit a possibility of the rite described in ŚB or any similar such rite being a source of the *Indramaha* festival and being an inspiration for the legendary story of it as related in MBh.

Recapitulating our remarks, we shall mention once more the opinion of Dr. Raghavan who holds that theatre (*Nāṭya*) was a part of the *Indradhvaja* festival, which it later outgrew and which in the form of preliminaries to a play became part of a theatrical performance. We feel that this was a second stage of a pro-

[1] *SB*, 3.2.1.32-4 ; 3.2.2.34-5.

Still the *Upahavya* rite is the most probable source of the *Indramaha* festival, since that rite seems to be closely connected with the victory of Indra over the demons. The Śankhāyana Śrautasūtra has a following passage : "Indra had slain the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭṛ, he had given over to the hyenas the ascetic Arunmukha. All the beings cried out at him. He moved aside of the gods. The gods said : If he shall move in this manner Asuras will overcome us. Let us devise that rite by which we shall be able to call him unto us. They beheld that (one-day) rite (called) *upahavya*." (Caland, *SSS*, p. 404/14.50.1/). Further Dr. Keith says that "*Upahavya...* is born of the strife between the gods and the Asuras." (*RPVU*, p. 338)

[2] Kane, *HDS*, p. 823.

[3] *SB*, 11.6.3.9. *J. Br*, II.87.

[4] *SB*, 3.2.1.28.

cess which had its sources in the ritual of *Yajña*. The first stage was similar in nature to the second one but referred to the sacrifice and the *Indradhvaja* ceremony. Originally it might have been part of the sacrificial ritual. Later it outgrew its ritualistic environment and became an independent ceremony. The Soma sacrifice in its turn became only one of many items of the whole ceremony.[1]

The conclusion is obvious. Such process brought into the realm of *Nāṭya* plenty of ideas connected with the sacrifice and its ritual. This, in addition to the elements listed in the first part of this chapter, convinces us that the key to the comprehension of the *Nāṭyotpatti* is to be found among the ideas and speculations accepting *Yajña* as the central theological and philosophical concept and elaborating the detailed implications of such an attitude.

[1] *Atharva Pariśiṣṭas*, XIX.

5

NĀṬYA AND VEDA

The gods led by Indra approached Brahmā asking him to create an object of diversion. Since the Vedas were not to be listened to by those born as Śūdras, the gods requested Brahmā to create another Veda which will be *sārvavarṇikam*. "Let it be so, said he in reply and then having dismissed the king of gods he resorted to yoga and recalled to mind the four Vedas. He then thought : 'I shall make a fifth Veda on the *Nāṭya*.. with this resolve the Holy One (*Bhagavat*) from his memory of all the Vedas shaped this *Nāṭyaveda* compiled from the four of them. The recitative (*pāṭhya*) he took from the Ṛgveda, the song from the Sāma, Histrionic Representation (*abhinaya*) from the Yajus and Sentiments (*rasa*) from the Atharvaveda, /and/ thus was created the *Nāṭyaveda* connected with the Vedas..."[1]

Just as the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* in general has become subject to controversy, so in a similar way has been this particular

[1] *NŚ. MMG*, I, p. 3-4

"mahendrapramukhāir devāir uktaḥ kila pitāmahaḥ/
krīḍanīyakam icchāmo dṛśyaṁ śravyaṁ ca yad bhavet//
na vedavyavahāro 'yam saṁśrāvyaḥ śūdrajātiṣu/
tasmāt sṛja paraṁ vedam pañcamaṁ sārvavarṇikam//
evam astv iti tān uktvā devarājaṁ visṛjya ca/
sasmāra caturo vedān yogam āsthāya tattvavit//

....

nāṭyākhyaṁ pañcamaṁ vedaṁ setihāsaṁ karomy aham//
evaṁ saṁkalpya bhagavān sarvavedān anusmaran/
nāṭyavedaṁ tataś cakre caturvedāṅgasambhavam//
jagrāha pāṭhyam ṛgvedāt sāmabhyo gītam eva ca/
yajurvedād abhinayān rasān ātharvaṇād api//
vedopavedāiḥ sambaddho nāṭyavedo mahātmanā/
evam bhagavatā sṛṣṭo brahmaṇā sarvavedinā/"

point of it.[1] On the present occasion we shall discuss only one problem which seems to be generally misconceived. What exactly are the Vedas? A general statement of Shekhar, for instance, describing them as eternal and as being an unlimited source of knowledge[2] although correct does not suffice. Especially since Shekhar obviously treats such an attitude as more or less primitive and belonging to the category of a blind religious belief. Let us see, therefore, whether this description does justice to the concept of the Vedas in Indian thinking. ŚB provides one of the earliest and clearest definitions of the character of the Vedas. It says : Prajāpati—'looked around over all existing things, and beheld all existing things in the threefold lore (the Veda)...I will construct for myself a body so as to contain the whole threefold lore...in this manner he put this threefold lore into his own self and...became the body of all existing things."[3] We learn further from the same Brāhmaṇa that Brahman—here obviously in his already more or less Upaniṣadic connotation—is thought

[1] Usually that derivation of *Nāṭya* from the Vedas earned for itself an unsparing censure. Jagirdar, for instance, writes that it has been the age-long tendency of the Hindu mind to trace back everything to the Vedas. So a statement of the kind under question is more a tribute to the sanctity and hold of the Vedas than a reference to a fact. (*DSL*, p. 33-4) We have already pointed out certain inconsistencies of Jagirdar's approach. His attitude towards the derivation of *Nāṭya* from the Vedas is once more an inconsistency. If tracing everything to a God is in Jagirdar's opinion an expression of an outlook or theory, why then—one is tempted to ask—a similar attempt to trace everything to the Vedas cannot be comprehended in a similar way ? The more so that the Vedas beginning with the triple science of the Brāhmaṇas and ending with the assurance of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa that Brahmā is one with the four Vedas, are systematically and persistently identified with that god. Similarly disappointed is Shekhar who writes that the slavish tendency of tracing the origins from the Vedic texts often leads to the disadvantage of ignoring other patent factors (*SDOP*, p. I) We have written before that Shekhar understands Chapter I of *NŚ* as an attempt to camouflage the non-Aryan parentage of *Nāṭya*. Naturally having adopted this attitude Shekhar is disappointed that the cunning device of the clever author of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* to derive *Nāṭya* from the Vedas deprived us of some other account of the origin of theatre which would more readily yield a concrete historical material. As we have already said, we consider not only this point, but the whole approach of Shekhar, erroneous.

[2] Shekhar, *SDOD*, p. I.

[3] *ŚB*, 10.4.2.21-22 and 27.

identical with "the triple science' and that such Brahman is the foundation of everything here.[1] It is in the light of these meaningful pronouncements that we have to discuss the two most common objections levelled against the trend to derive everything from the Vedas. The first says that it is an automatic or slavish tendency and the second holds that it is in order to gain orthodox approval for a given activity or work. Both objections, or rather evaluations, grew out of an original miscomprehension of the meaning of the Vedas. If we take the Vedas merely for 'the holy writ of the Hindus' these miscomprehensions are bound to arise. Yet from the quoted passages of ŚB it is absolutely clear that originally the three Vedas and later (according to Viṣṇu Purāṇa) all four of them have first of all to be considered as the respectively three or fourfold aspect of both the ultimate and the ordinary reality. The written text of the Vedas seems thus to be only one more way in which these aspects manifest themselves in the creation. Thus understood, the Vedas acquire an evident philosophical meaning concealed by the fact that philosophical thinking at an early stage is never fully free from mythological associations and theological argumentation. Yet supposing the critics will further insist that such a statement within the framework of Indian thinking should, nevertheless, be understood in their way. In order to supply an answer to this objection we shall pose the following questions : Is the identification of Brahman with the Vedas an effort to seek the approval of the orthodoxy for Brahman or for the Vedas—or for that matter is it a slavish tendency ? Is the statement that Prajāpati beheld all existing things in the threefold lore an attempt to gain an orthodox recognition for all existing things or is it a slavish tendency of the author of ŚB ? To take a later example, —should the intentions of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, which states that in the creation of the world is manifested Brahmā, who is composed of the *Ric* hymns ; in its permanence Viṣṇu, who is composed of the *Yajus* hymns, and Śiva who is composed of the *Sāman* at the dissolution,[2] also be treated as an attempt to gain Orthodoxy's approval for the Universe, or should it be treated as one more example of that notorious 'slavish tendency'? These

[1] *op. cit*, 6.11.8.
[2] *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, transl. by F.E. Pargiter, p. 552ff.

are, of course, rhetorical questions. For it is obvious that in all these cases the Vedas stand for a philosophical concept of a universal principle of three or four-foldness.[1] It follows from above that the criticism hitherto levelled against the statement of NŚ relating *Nāṭya* to the Vedas was remarkably shallow. This granted, we still have to answer a question as to how to understand the concrete derivation of the *nāṭyāṅgas* from the four Vedas in the light of the philosophical import of the Vedas.

The only scholar and thinker, Abhinavagupta, whose opinion differs from that shared by most modern scholars, happened to live one millennium ago and at the first glance his close adherence to the basic text of NŚ seems to corroborate the above criticism. NŚ itself does not supply a direct answer to the question why *Nāṭya* had to be derived from the Vedas. The only plausible answer to this is supplied indirectly by H.W. Wells, who in connection with his theory of equilibrium writes that it was in India presumably at first taken for granted and later allowed to rest largely unnoted.[2] Abhinavagupta corroborates in this respect our assumption. Commenting on the words *vedusammitaḥ* he says that *Nāṭya* through its means (the fate of different types of heroes and villains and the enjoyment of rasa) directs the mind of men toward the fulfillment of the four *puruṣārthas* and makes it abandon the cause of *adharma*. All this, adds Abhinava, is absolutely obvious to us who have grasped the essence of *Śruti*.[3] It becomes evident that in order to understand all these elements of *Nāṭya* which were obvious for a contemporary Hindu and therefore taken for granted or largely unnoted, we have to grasp the essence of *Śruti*, i.e., the essence of the background which is responsible for the formulations of NŚ. The lack of a grasp of this background by the majority of modern critics is responsible for all the accusations of slavishness and 'orthodox-approval-seeking' generously bestowed on NŚ by them. Returning to Abhinavagupta we shall quote another of his opinions which throws some light on his understanding of the relationship of *Nāṭya* and the Vedas. *Nāṭya*—according to him,

[1] Keith, *AA*, p. 254 (III.2.4.). Wilson, *VP*, III, p. 38-9.

[2] Wells, *CDI*, p. 42.

[3] *HABh*, p. 46 ; "*...dharmādicatuṣkopāyopādeyadhiyam adharmādibhyaś ca nivṛttim nirviśaṅkaṁ vidhatta ity asmākam adhigatasrutitattvānām api pratyakṣasiddham evaitat.*"

—is different from such branches of learning where an order is the main motivation and where persons are enjoined upon or compelled to act. *Nāṭya* brings about the self-existent manifest wisdom, and therefore, *Nāṭya* alone is the primary form of the Vedas.[1] It appears now that neither NŚ nor Abhinavagupta can be accused of slavishness or any other guilt implying blind or mechanical usage of words, sentences and concepts in order to comfort the delicate feeling of the orthodox. To the contrary, both the author of the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend and Abhinavagupta obviously enunciate an outlook or theory which they logically pursue throughout their writings.

The above discussion provides us with the following arguments: first: the Vedas primarily are the three or fourfold principle of reality, only then are they the three or four concrete texts or books; second; the Vedas and *Nāṭya* are comparable or identical on the ground of their common role as leading to the attainment of the four *puruṣārthas* and as containing the manifest self-existent wisdom. In what follows we propose to contribute some more such arguments which will permit us to draw a final conclusion concerning the relationship of *Nāṭya* and the Vedas.

In the light of the definition of *Nāṭya* the enigma of its derivation from the Vedas loses its puzzling features and becomes an absolutely natural and even unavoidable condition. The definition in question runs as follows: "*trāilokyasya asya sarvasya nāṭyam bhāvānukīrtanam*."[2] We have already discussed *Nāṭya* as Śilpa.[3] Our conclusion in this respect rested on the assumption that the definition of *Śilpa* as anything done in the imitation or the image of the angelic works of art (*śilpas*), i.e., in the image of nature, is well applicable to *Nāṭya*. The concept of *Śilpa* as an image is meaningfully introduced in the Vājasaneyī Saṁhita (IV.9). "Ye are the images of *Rik* and *Sāman*" says this text and ŚB refers it to a black and a white antelope hides.[4] Further these images are said to be conformable

[1] *HABh*, p. 103 ; "*tenākramyayojanātmaka-niyogātmaka-śāsanaprāṇa-śāstravāilakṣaṇyena svayamupārūḍhajñānābhidhānavataḥ/vidaḥ/ prāṇavedarūpatā nāṭyasyāiveti siddham.*"

[2] *NŚ. KM*, I. 107.

[3] See p. 45.

[4] *ŚB*, 3.2.1.5.

to *riks* and *sāmans*.[1] Another passage of ŚB worth quoting in this connection precedes these passages already mentioned. "But if there be only one (skin), then it is an image of these (three) worlds; then he consecrates him on these (three) worlds. Those (hairs) which are white are an image of the sky; those which are black are (an image) of this (earth);—or, if he likes, conversely: those which are black are an image of the sky and those which are white are (an image) of this (earth). Those which are of brownish yellow colour, are an image of the atmosphere. Thus he consecrates him on these (three) worlds."[2] All these statements of ŚB broaden the definition of *Śilpa* describing it as any image conformable to its object which is conceived of as an original entity—be it the whole three worlds or only Ṛc and *Sāman*. Though this differentiation seems to be rather immaterial since conformity to the three worlds implies conformity not only to Ṛc and *Sāman* but to the whole *trayī vidyā* which is its essence.[3] Thus *Nāṭya*, which according to its definition can also be termed a *Śilpa* of the three worlds, has to be conformable to the Vedas which actually are the universe or the three worlds. This requirement implies the need of a material for the creation of *Nāṭya* which will make it into a tool capable of representing properly that angelic *Śilpa* which is the Universe. This is why the Vedas alone could supply the material out of which *Nāṭya* was fashioned. The way the Vedas were used for the creation of *Nāṭya* indicates two important features given to this art by the theoreticians responsible for the legend of the *Nāṭyotpatti*. One already alluded to, is its catholicity and another is its subsequency to the *trāilokya* in the order of creation. We have already noted repeatedly that the Vedas according to Indian thinking are 'all existing things'. Thus the derivation of *Nāṭya* from them ensures that it will be a universal art able to represent faithfully whatever happens in the whole creation. Here one can say that since the Vedas both in the case of the Universe and of *Nāṭya* were the original material for their construction, therefore, both the Universe and *Nāṭya* should be

[1] *ŚB*, 3.2.1.5.
[2] *ŚB*, 3.2.1.3.
[3] *ŚB*, 4.6.7.1; 10.4.2.21; 10.6.5.5.

considered identical. This objection brings us to the second problem, i.e., that of the subsequency of *Nāṭya* to the creation. The circumstances in which *Nāṭya* was created, as well as the way in which the Vedas were utilised for its creation point unmistakably to its being only a tool for the representation or imitation of the World. The problem of the circumstances is perfectly clear. When Indra submitted to Brahmā the request of the gods to create an object of entertainment, the World with all its virtues and vices was already fully in existence.[1] The second point, however, requires some elucidation.

Hitherto we have ignored in our discussion *Yajña*—an important aspect of the concept of creation thought of as a manifest three or fourfold lore. In the theological and philosophical literature of ancient India, there are literally countless references to the fact that creation and existence are nothing more but nothing less than a huge *Yajña* itself. Lévi supplies the most pointed synthesis of this notion. He writes that "the sacrifice is the unique reality and at the same time it is both the creator and the creation. All the phenomena of the universe, he adds, are a simple reflection of the sacrifice and the sacrifice bestows on them their semblance of existence."[2] Now—according to ŚB—this same threefold science is the sacrifice,[3] the sole difference being motion or movement which makes a static principle of *trayī vidyā* active in the form of the sacrifice, i.e., creation.[4] Jāiminīya Brāḥmaṇa after stressing *eka eva yajña* says '*Prajāpatir yajña eva iti*'.[5] The same Prajāpati, as we know from ŚB, decided to construct for himself 'a body so as to contain the whole threefold lore' and thus 'he became the body of all existing things.[6] Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka says about him 'the

[1] *NŚ. KM*,I.8-11.

[2] Levi, *DS* ,p. 10.

[3] *ŚB*, 1.1.4.3.

[4] Agrawala, *VL*, p.21-2, "The cosmos is conceived of as a *Yajña* in which the Creator Himself has offered in order to mirror His Totality in the Trinitarian Manifestation of the sacrifice, of the *Yajña*." p. 23; "The Veda as the basic principle stands for stasis, that is, the principle of rest in which all the powers of manifest creation have their source." p. 148; "*Yajña* signifies the emergence of dynamic activity out of the womb of stillness or rest."

[5] *JBr*. II. 70, p. 187.

[6] See p. 54.

indestructible, which has the *Yajus* as belly, the *Sāman* as head, the *Ric* as form, he should be known as Brahman'.[1] Such Prajāpati or Brahmā, according to Manusmṛti, 'from fire, wind, and the sun drew forth the threefold eternal Veda, called *Rik*, *Yajus*, and *Sāman*, for the due performance of the sacrifice'[2], which as ŚB holds, is established 'at the same (*upāṁśu*) graha by means of the *Yajus*; at the first chant (*stotra*) by means of the *Sāman*; and at the first recitation (*Śāstra*) by means of the *Rik*!'[3] As we can see, the sacrifice is fashioned from the Vedas and the two principles are vitally interconnected. Physically the Vedas and the Sacrifice known to us as the texts and the ritual are only symbols of the two eternal principles of rest and motion standing behind them, or they are, in a sense, a representation on the human plane of those original cosmic happenings. Yet metaphysically there is no difference between an earthly *Yajña* and the cosmic one. '*Eka eva yajña*'.

The universal principle of the Vedas, shaped for the earthly *Yajña* and employed in it, acquires certain specific features. The abstract concept of the *Ṛc* becomes the Ṛgveda, i.e., a collection of hymns for the recitation at the sacrifice. The *Sāman* becomes the Sāmaveda, i.e., a collection of hymns to be chanted at the sacrifice. Finally the *Yajus* assumes the shape of the Yajurveda, i.e., a collection of hymns such as they accompany the ritual of the sacrifice. The method according to which different *nāṭyāṅgas* were derived from the Vedas seems to indicate a plan according to which *Nāṭya* was conceived on the one hand as possessing the universal aspect brought into it by the Vedas—the universal principle, and on the other hand as possessing a quality of subsequency in the relation to the sacrifice-creation, since the Vedas used to mould *Nāṭya* had first to be transformed into creation through their application in the sacrifice. Abhinavagupta seems to share this point of view. Discussing the derivation of the recitation from the Ṛgveda, song from the Sāmaveda, and acting from the Yajurveda[4] Abhinava makes it clear that in all three cases these were the Vedas put to actual sacrificial practice which were used for the creation of

[1] Keith, *SA*, III.7., p. 20.
[2] Bühler, *LM*, I, 23.
[3] *ŚB*, 4.1.1.6-7.
[4] *HABh*, pp. 92 ff.

Nāṭya.[1] At one instance even he uses the term *yāgopakāritva*[2] underlining by it the necessity, for that universal *trayī vidyā* which is beyond perception, to be transmuted through *yāgopakāritva* into *trāilokya*, of which exclusively the representation (*anukīrtana*) is possible. Yet elsewhere Abhinavagupta called *Nāṭya* 'the primary form of the Vedas', thus stressing *Nāṭyas* universality which allows it to bring about the self-existent manifest wisdom.[3]

The problem of the fourth Veda—the Atharva deserves somewhat separate treatment. Being unable after careful consideration to find any convincing speculative justification for the derivation of the *rasa* from the Atharvaveda,[4] we have been forced to conclude that in all probability, the presence of the Atharvaveda in our account reflects a process which resulted in the admission of the Atharvaveda to the group of the original three Vedas in general.

We have to stress at the very outset that *rasa* can by no means be considered as a separate element which could be contributed to *Nāṭya* from a separate source. *Rasa* cannot be termed an *aṅga* of *Nāṭya*, but, as Abhinava puts it, should be treated as its soul (*ātman*).[5] One can notice in this connection that the relationship between these *Śilpas* of KBr[6] and *Nāṭya* seems to corroborate our attitude. There we have music, dance, singing and recitation mentioned. From those *Nāṭya* was fashioned and *rasa* came as a fulfilment resulting from it. *Rasa* does not occur without acting and acting is, so to speak, automatically followed by *Rasa.*[7] '*Raso vāī saḥ*' has the Tāittirīya Upaniṣad.[8] Thus *rasa* appears to be He—the Brahman and the triple science—not one of the three (or four) but all of them—their synthesis, The

[1] *NŚ. KM*, I. 17.

[2] *op. cit*, Chapter 6.

[3] See p. 55.

[4] In spite of the laborious effort of Abhinavagupta to make this derivation sound convincing. *HABh*, p. 98.

[5] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 1, III. p. 1.

[6] See p. 44.

[7] *NŚ MMG*, I, p. 107, 36, ; "There can be no Sentiments (*rasa*) prior to (lit. without) the States (bhāva) and no States without the Sentiments/ following it/, and during the Histrionic Representation they are produced from their mutual relation" ("*na bhāvahīno'sti raso na bhāvo rasavarjitah/ parasparakṛtā siddhis tayor abhinaye bhavet*").

[8] Gambhīra, *EV*, 355 (VII. 1).

Atharvaveda, here, claims for itself considerably more than just one of the components of *Nāṭya*. This 'behaviour' of the Atharvaveda, as we have already noted above, bears a close resemblance to the way in which it claimed to be part of the sacrifice, and therefore, to be the fourth Veda. Macdonell gives the following account of this problem : "A similar conclusion may be drawn from occasional statements in the classical texts, and especially from the efforts of the later Atharvan writings themselves to vindicate the character of their Veda. These ritual texts not only never enumerate the Vedas without including the Atharvaveda but even sometimes place it at the head of the four Vedas. Under a sense of the exclusion of their Veda from the sphere of the sacrificial ritual, they lay claim to the fourth priest (the *brahman*), who in the Vedic religion was not attached to any of the three Vedas, but being required to have a knowledge of all three and of their sacrificial application, acted as superintendent or director of the sacrificial ceremonial. Ingeniously availing themselves of the fact that he was unconnected with any of the three Vedas, they put forward the claim of the fourth Veda as the special sphere of the fourth priest. The priest, moreover, was the most important as possessing a universal knowledge of the religious lore (*brahma*), the comprehensive esoteric understanding of the nature of the gods and of the mystery of the sacrifice. Hence the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa exalts the Atharva as the highest religious lore (*brahma*), and calls it Brahma-veda."[1]

Thus *Nāṭya*, the representation of the true condition of the Three worlds, was created. The ideas which NŚ tries to convey deriving *Nāṭya* from the Vedas are only at the first glance limited to the Indian cultural milieu. Our study of it shows beyond doubt that the pronouncements of NŚ are the result of a very profound study and understanding of theatre. Both the idea of catholicity of theatre, as well as that of its subsequency, in order of creation, to the universe are valid in the analysis of any theatre in the world. A truly great theatre has to mirror all aspects of existence without any exception. But at the same time man created true theatre only after he started to speculate about the nature of existence, i.e., in the terms of Indian thinking, only after he sacrificed.

[1] Macdonell, *HSL*, p. 163.

6

NĀṬYA, *GODS*, *SAGES AND MEN*

Having created *Nāṭya* Brahmā addressed Indra the king of gods urging him to put it into practice. Indra refused and as an excuse gave gods' inability to practise it. He further advised Brahmā to ask the Ṛṣis to implement it. Thus Bharata, a sage, was requested to take care of *Nāṭya*. He in turn trained in it his hundred sons.[1] This is the next important event described in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*. It poses three following questions: Why did Indra refuse to practice *Nāṭya* and why he declared gods' inability to do it? Who was Bharata and why was he entrusted with its practical implementation? Who his hundred sons were?

An answer to our first question was attempted by Shekhar and, to certain extent, by Ghosh. The interpretation proposed by them, on the one hand, resulted from their theory of the non-Aryan origin of theatre. On the other hand, it follows the widely accepted theory which holds that in many cases the

[1] *NŚ. GOS.* I,19-40

"utpādya nāṭyavedaṁ tu brahmovāca sureśvaram/
itihāso mayā sṛṣṭaḥ sa sureṣu nijyatām//

....

tac chrutvā vacanaṁ śakro brahmaṇā yad udāhṛtam/
prāñjaliḥ praṇato bhūtvā pratyuvaca pitāmaham//
grahaṇe dhāraṇe jñāne prayoge cāsya sattama/
aśaktā bhagavan devā ayogyā nāṭyakarmaṇi//
ya ime vedaguhyajñā ṛṣayaḥ saṁśitavratāḥ/
ete'sya grahaṇe śaktāḥ prayoge dhāraṇe tathā//
śrutvā tu śakravacanam mām āhāmbujasambhavaḥ/
tvam putraśatasaṁyuktaḥ prayoktā'sya bhavānagha//
ājñāpitoviditvā'haṁ nāṭyavedaṁ pitāmahāt/
putrān adhyāpayāmāsa prayogaṁ capi tattvataḥ//"

Vedic gods stand for the Aryans and the Asuras for the non-Aryans. Shekhar words his opinion as follows: "Possibly, Indra and other gods refused to take the responsibilities of staging a play because the Aryan community perhaps lacked the traditions, actors, and other equipment."[1] This theory suffers from two basic weaknesses. One is the supposed lack of a suitable artistic tradition among the Aryans, as contrasted with the non-Aryans who, in the eyes of Shekhar, appear to be better qualified for the authorship of *Nāṭya*. Another shortcoming of this theory is hidden in the ease with which Shekhar chooses only half of the general analogy taking the gods for the Aryans all right, but with the respect to the non-Aryans substituting a Ṛṣi for the Asuras whose animosity towards theatre shown in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend is irreconcilable with the whole theory presented by Shekhar. This point we shall discuss further when dealing with the identity of Bharata. In connection with the first one, we have to recall and stress our general disagreement with the theory of the non-Aryan origin of theatre, the reasons of which we have already given.[2] Here we shall concentrate on the problem of the artistic traditions of both peoples which appear to be a corner-stone of the approach in question. The assumption underlying the attitude of giving preference to the non-Aryans seems to rest on the belief that there is more evidence making a connection of the origin of theatre with the non-Aryans more probable than with the Aryans. Happily the case is not yet closed and we have every reason to believe that a careful and impartial scrutiny of the material would rather favour the Aryans or, at least, would in this respect equate both traditions. It strikes the critic that in relation to this problem the scarcity of the information concerning the non-Aryans causes its over-valuation and the comparative abundance of it in the case of the Aryans seems to be the reason for its under-valuation.

The protagonists of the non-Aryan origin of theatre usually marshal to their support three main arguments. The first of them is the connection of the god Śiva, on the one hand, with the Indus Valley culture, and on the other hand, with *Nāṭya*.

[1] Shekhar, *SDOD*, p. 36. *NŚ. MMG*, p. 5fn.

[2] See Chapter 1.

This god closely associated with the pre-Aryan phallic worship is at the same time in his Naṭarāja form considered a patron of *Nāṭya*. This argument is unsatisfactory because of two reasons. First of all the identity of Naṭarāja and the 'three-horned' god needs an intermediary in the form of the Yogi-incarnation of Śiva. This is enough to term the relationship as dubious. Besides, the association of Naṭarāja with *Nāṭya* is comparably recent, since he is not mentioned in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*.[1] The second argument raised to the support of the non-Aryan descent of *Nāṭya* underlines the importance of dance in the Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa culture. This contention has its source in the little figurine of a so called dancing girl. Unhappily that image still has to be termed 'a so called dancing girl' since the only indication that she is represented in the dancing posture emanates from the fact that her right hand rests on her hip. We would certainly hesitate to take it for a conclusive proof of the existence of a widely spread art of dancing among the Indus Valley people. Finally the third argument pointed by the adherents of this theory stresses the association of the Indus Valley people and modern Dravidians among whom the ancient art of dancing and theatre survived to this day. The most serious objection to this argument is that the identity of the Dravidians of today and the pre-Aryans, although probable, has yet to be proved. Besides, the fact that the classical theatre and dance have lived to this day in the South can be equally well explained without bringing in such an awfully ancient relationship.[2] Summarising these remarks we have to stress that all the arguments listed above depend too much on an *a priori* accepted theory and therefore, they are all circumstantial offering thus a very slender ground for the support of the theory of the origin of *Nāṭya* among the non-Aryans.

The evidence of the Vedic literature does not seem to leave any doubt as to the existence of a suitable artistic tradition among the Aryans capable of furnishing a proper background for the creation of the art of theatre. This is especially so in

[1] Śiva, who is mentioned there, is relegated to a very subordinate position. Chapter I.

[2] M.C. Byrski, 'Studies in Nāṭya', *Bhāratī*. Bulletin of the College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University, No. 6, part II, 1962-63, p. 112-3.

case we accept the importance of dance in the process of the creation of theatre. To begin with we have to point out that Śiva is not the first and the only dancing god known to the Hindus. Āitareya Āraṇyaka speaks about Indra dancing an *anuṣṭubh*.[1] Further RV has a passage describing the worlds as conceived of so many particles of dust stirred into motion, which rapid foot movement of the dancing god made to splash into space.[2] In the first case Indra, the god associated with the merriment of the *Indramaha* festival and with *Nāṭya* is mentioned by name and in the second case it is probably he alluded to, since there can be no question of Śiva being known to the Vedic Aryans at that time. Besides, in the Brāhmaṇas and other literature concerned with the sacrificial ritual we find literally countless references to dance. We have already mentioned the most important of them to be found in the Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa.[3] Ghosh himself quotes in this respect Kātyāyana Śrāutasūtra.[4] ŚB tells a story of the gods attracting Vāc who was with the Asuras through the means of music, songs and dance.[5] Now we can see that the gods of the Aryans were not conceived as ignorant of dance which was hardly ever censored in the Vedic literature.[6] Thus there is absolutely no reason to hold that they and their people were less qualified to practise an art of theatre than their non-Aryan counterparts. On the contrary, the concept of *Śilpas,* discussed in the first chapter of the second part of this study, seems to give a decisive advantage to the Aryans.

It clearly follows from the foregoing discussion that the answer supplied to our first question by Shekhar and Ghosh cannot be accepted as a proper one. Does then Abhinavagupta supply more satisfactory answer ? He holds that because of preponderance of happiness among the gods, the plethoric conclusion of

[1] Keith, *AA*, II. 3.5., p. 219.

[2] Agrawala, VI, p. 32. *RV*, 10.72.6.

[3] See p. 44.

[4] Ghosh, *CHHD*, p. 30. *KSu*, 21.3.11.

[5] Lévi, *DS*, p. 33.

[6] Justice demands to mention here the testimony of the *Jāiminīya Br.* (II. 69, p. 186) strongly censoring dance and playing *vīṇā*, which are called *mṛtyor senās*. Yet it also proves that both arts must have been extensively practised, since they earned such an epithet.

the performance produced by them would be difficult to achieve even if they were compelled to do so by the injunction of their king Indra.[1] This would be so because both happiness and despair in equal measure are indispensable preconditions of *Nāṭya.*[2] Further from his remark concerning the Ṛṣis it becomes obvious that he considers gods to be unable to apply *sāttvika-abhinaya* which includes such reactions as tears, perspiration, trembling etc.[3] These remarks of Abhinavagupta are in agreement with the pronouncement of NŚ which appears to be the definition of *Nāṭya.*[4] According to it the innate disposition of the world full of happiness and despair furnished with the four abhinayas is called *Nāṭya.* As we can see, both the existence of *duḥkha* and the *abhinaya* are the essentials of *Nāṭya*, Sāgaranandin writes in the Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa that dramas such as *nāṭaka* should be composed with the reference to Bhāratavarṣa where alone joy and sorrow are possible. Elsewhere, in the divine and semi-divine, regions there is joy indeed but no sorrow.[5] Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says that evil, verily, does not go to gods.[6] Kāṭha Upaniṣad adds that in the heavenly world there is no fear whatsoever. Gone beyond sorrow, one rejoices in the heavenly world.[7] This is so far as the first point made by Abhinavagupta is concerned. General characteristics of the gods in their turn support Abhinava's second contention. Gods neither drink nor eat.[8] They are exempted from perspiration; they have unwinking eyes, unfading garlands and they are free from dust. Besides they stand without touching the ground.[9] Such beings, of course are unable to fulfil the requirements of the *abhinaya.* Yet the refusal of the gods to become the performers of *Nāṭya*, although according to Abhinavagupta caused by some practical considerations listed above, seems to have some more profound reasons. For after all gods can freely assume

[1] *HABh*, p. 108 "*devāḥ sukhabhuyiṣthatvāt svāmyādeśāt katham apiyadi pravarteran tat pūrṇaparyavasānaṁ tu durlabham etāirity arthaḥ*|".

[2] *NŚ. GOS*, 1. 119, see p. 15 fn. 2.

[3] *HABh*, p. 109.

[4] Varma, *NNN*, p. 46.

[5] *NLRK*, 120, p. 10.

[6] *BUp*, I. 5.20, p. 90.

[7] *KUp*, 1.12, p. 343.

[8] *CUp*, 3.7.1, p. 205.

[9] Keith, *MAR* (*I*), p. 149.

human shape with all it implies and act accordingly.

In order to answer this question we shall have to remember first the main conclusion of the preceding chapter. *Nāṭya*, as we saw there, was created from the *yāgopakārin* Vedas. In that way it became, as it were, a shadow sacrifice. But it must be noted that the sacrifice meant here is the sacrifice offered by man—the sacrifice on a human plane. Such a sacrifice besides its universal metaphysical aspect, is also a means of subsistence to the gods—it is their food and they would be in a wretched state should these offerings fail.[1] Now gods, as we remember, desired an object of diversion,[2]—an object which would satisfy their aesthetic thirst. This is why Brahmā created that delightful visual sacrifice of the gods,[3]—the replica of a regular *Yajña*. But as *Yajña* needs priests to become productive of 'food', so the *kāntam kratum cakṣuṣām* needs performers to become productive of the essence satisfying the aesthetic thirst of the gods. It is not surprising, therefore, that the gods refused to handle a tool designed to be handled by man for their and his satisfaction.[4]

Thus the gods refused their own active participation in practising *nāṭya* and instead suggested the Ṛṣis as better qualified to do it. Here we come to another problem already announced at the beginning of this chapter. Who was Bharata and why was he asked to take care of the newly created Veda? At the very outset we should like to stress that we are not going to indulge here into the controversy regarding the real authorship of the compendium going under the appellation of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. We shall be solely concerned with Bharata as the one of the four most important personages of the mythological account of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*.[5] It is in his role of a person chosen by Brahmā to hear the *Nāṭyaveda* uttered by this god that Bharata interests us here. The problem whether Bharata was an ordinary human being and an author of the Nāṭyaśāstra is

[1] Lévi, *DS*, p.27-8. *ŚB*, 2.4.2.1-4. Hopkins, *EM*, p.57-8

[2] *NŚ*. *GOS*, I.11

[3] Kālidāsa, *MA*, I.4

[4] It may be of interest to note that the traditional theatres of the type of the *Bhāgavatamalanāṭakam* of Mellatur or of *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* of Kerala count deities as the most important among their spectators.

[5] See p. 26.

interesting but lies wholly outside the pale of our discussion.[1]

Acharya Viśveśvar, a modern commentator of NŚ and the Abhinavabhāratī, feels that the participation of Bharatamuni or in general Ṛṣis and Munis in the practical usage of *Nāṭya* is a

[1] It does not seem possible to solve the problem of the authorship of *NŚ* at the present stage of our knowledge of the history of *Nāṭya*. Roughly speaking we can talk about two general approaches to this problem. One takes Bharata for a real person and a real author of the most of the actual text of NŚ. Another treats Bharata as a par excellence mythical figure and usually treats *NŚ* as a compendium freely and frequently rehandled and passed under that mythical name. The first trend is well represented by K.M. Varma, who discusses extensively this problem and concludes that Bharata is a real figure, and the undisputed author of *NŚ*. Here Varma follows Abhinavagupta, for he gives as the reasons of his conclusion—firstly, an unbroken and general acceptance of Bharata's authorship; secondly, the fact that there is nobody else to claim it (*SWB*, p. 123 ff). Shekhar is another scholar who treats Bharata as a real person and assures us that Bharata could only be a scion of a non-Aryan family of the artistes, who did his best to secure recognition for the members of his troupe (*SDOD*, p. 40). The second trend has somewhat larger following. Keith calls Bharata a sage and an eponymous hero of the drama (*SD*, p. 290). Ghosh writes that the legend-maker probably on the analogy of the names like Manusmṛti, Gatama-sūtra and such others found an author of the Bharata-sūtra in a Bharata-muni of his own creation. Further he suggests that the text of a Sūtra form destined for the Bharatas (identical with *naṭas*) existed earlier and that Bharatmuni is an eponymous figure (*PNS*, *IHQ*, VI, 1930, p. 73. *NŚ*. *MMG*, p. LXXI). Already in 1916 Gawronski proposed an identical solution. He wrote that Bharata, an absolutely pale and unmotivated figure, is a scholarly abstraction of the word *bharata*. That word itself originally denoted an epic rhapsodist and remains in doubtless connection with the name of the Bharata tribe. (*PDI*, p. 39). Kane supports this view-point writing that it is quite possible that someone who had mastered the traditional lore of the histrionic art and was well disposed to *bharatas* (actors) put together most of the present Nāṭyaśāstra and in order to glorify the tribe of *bharatas* passed it on as a work of a mythical hero. (*HSP*, p. 28) Jagirdar suggests slightly different solution. He dismisses both Bharata as a real person and as an eponymous creation of *bharatas*. Instead he forwards a theory according to which the Vedic family of Bharatas analogous to Vaśiṣṭhas, was the first sponsor of Dramatic Representation (*DSL*, p. 27 ff). Our own preference is for the second trend. First of all because the only unquestionable evidence we are in possession of shows Bharata in the company of gods as a *par excellence* mythical hero. Besides we can hardly take the ancient tradition of the authorship of NŚ for its face value, since, as we know, mythology and history were never sharply distinguished by the scholars of the past.

strange and confusing theory. According to him the ṛṣis or munis are in no relationship to *Nāṭya*, *abhinaya*, etc., because they are free from material bonds, unacquainted with dance, singing and other skills required for *Nāṭya*.[1] Svāti[2] and very well known Nārada prove that the Ṛṣis were not only not unacquainted with dance, nusic and singing but, on the contrary, they were considered experts in these fields. Thus Bharata in his association with *Nāṭya* is not a lonely case. Although our subsequent remarks will concern only Bharata's association with theatre yet we are sure that they will also help us to consider less outrageous the association of any person of a Ṛṣi's standing with the arts in general.

Throughtout the whole of NŚ Bharata is called a Muni. This appellation is not reserved for him alone. His interlocutors, the sages *Ātreyapramukhāḥ* are also called Munis.[3] Yet, in their case NŚ is not at all consistent and calls them alternatively either Ṛṣis or Munis.[4] Especially interesting is the case of the twenty-third verse of Chaptar I of NŚ. Kāvyamālā's edition of NŚ as well as Gaekwad's note an alternate reading Muni for the one chosen by them, i.e., Ṛṣi. This choice in the case of the second edition follows Abhinavagupta's preference. But whatever it is, it clearly follows from the foregoing arguments that for the author of NŚ and for his commentators both words mean more or less the same.[5] Thus anyone who would like to find comfort in the fact that Bharata is never directly called a Ṛṣi but is called only a Muni and therefore, does not need to be treated very seriously is bound to be disappointed.[6]

Concluding these remarks we have to stress that Brahmā had chosen Muni or Ṛṣi as the only one fit to hear the *Nāṭyaveda*

1 *HABh*, p. 110.

2 *NŚ*, I, 50, XXXIV.2ff.

3 *NŚ. KM*, I.3.

4 *NŚ. KM*, IV.267, V.1, VIII. 1, XII.24, XXXVI.38-9.

5 Monier Williams gives following meanings of ṛṣi—a singer of sacred hymns, an inspired poet or sage; for muni he gives an inspired or ecstatic person, saint, sage, seer, etc.

6 Ghosh in the 'Problems of the Nāṭyaśāstra', *IHQ*, Vol. VI, 1930 says, "Though the story may be said to have the desired effect of giving *Nāṭya* a place in the religious ceremonies of Brāhmaṇism, it still had a flaw; for the so called *Nāṭyaveda* was not revealed to a Ṛṣi but to a Muni." (p. 73).

uttered by him and as the only one capable of putting it into practice.

We have already mentioned Shekhar's interesting attempt to oppose the gods—Aryans inept in the field of *Nāṭya* by the candidature of an expert Muni who, as Shekhar assures us, was a non-Aryan.[1] The only solid argument supporting this contention appears to be the fact that the actors termed *bharatas* and the sons of Bharata belong to the Śūdra *varṇa*. Unquestionable as this fact is, it gives little support to the non-Aryanism of Bharata himself. This is, first of all, because the testimony is furnished by the last chapter of NŚ, against an undiscriminate use of which as a source for the comprehension of Chapter I of NŚ, we have already voiced our opinion. Secondly, because even if we accept the testimony of this chapter, we shall have to agree that the curse did not affect Bharata himself but concerned his sons alone who were addressed by the Ṛṣis as Brāhmiṇs.[2] Finally we have to remind that Bharata is in Chapter I of NŚ actually called Brāhmin.[3] The only other source of a support to this theory of Shekhar could be found if it is proved that the Munis, in a way similar to the Asuras, can be considered as representing the non-Aryans. Yet in spite of certain alusions to such an eventuality which could be detected in the tenth maṇḍala of RV and in spite of a general possibility of the asceticism being connected with the 'three-horned' god of the Mohenjo-Dāro seal, it would be rather difficult to put convincingly such a theory. Even if it would appear possible, still these who are usually considered the Asuras are the Yatis as opposed to the Munis who are taken for the Aryans.[4] But undoubtedly the most serious drawback to this theory, even if it could be conclusively proved with respect to the original non-Aryan descent of the Munis, is the character of the engagement of the Muni in the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend. There he is the one to whom the *Nāṭyaveda* was revealed and he is the

[1] Shekhar, *SOD*, p. 40.

[2] *NŚ. KM*, XXXVI, 32.

[3] *op. cit*, I, 4.

[4] Ghurye, *IS*, p. 16-7. This point of view is shared by Bhandarkar, Kane and R.P. Chanda. Ghurye himself thinks that there is no sufficient basis to differentiate between both categories of the ascetics and that both should be considered Aryans.

one through whom the *Nāṭyaveda* has become known to men. Thus his role in our account has very little to do with the pure asceticism of the yogic type and is clearly that of a mediator and a seer. His role is, therefore, identical to that ascribed to both Ṛṣi and Muni through the later derivation of these two words. In later, post-Ṛgvedic times Muni comes to be derived as a name for ascetics because of mediation (*Mananāt*).[1] If, even in spite of Indra's friendship for the Munis,[2] they could in some way be associated with the non-Aryans, still this very derivation of their name proves that later they became equated with the Ṛṣis, whose Aryan purity seems to be unquestionable and who play a similar role of the mediators between the gods and men. This function of the Ṛṣis is connected with the revelation of which they are said to be the heroes. The Ṛṣis were created after the gods, along with men. Without that opportune encounter men would have never known the rites which were hidden from them by the jealous egoism of the gods. The clairvoyance of the Ṛṣis found what the gods discovered. That clairvoyance became the most important feature of the Ṛṣis so much so that there were efforts made to derive their name from the root *dṛś*.[3] The mediatory function of the Ṛṣis is well described by Keith, who writes that the place of the seers is in view of their relation to the sacrifice one of great importance: they are the means by which in the normal case men secure the essential knowledge of the ritual, and they are often indebted to the gods for it.[4]

One might have already noticed some of the reasons which made it necessary to use the good offices of a Ṛṣi in order to transmit *Nāṭya* to men. In the preceding chapter we have noted that *Nāṭya* was fashioned out of the *yāgopakārin* Vedas. The way it was fashioned makes *Nāṭya* a shadow-sacrifice as it were. This tool shaped out of the sacrificial ritual carried with itself that *svayamupārūḍhajñānābhidhāna*[1] or that reality which is nothing else but the Vedas[2] and which when associated with the

[1] Ghurye, *IS*, p. 12.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] Lévi, *DS*, p. 143.
[4] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 458.
[5] *HABh*, p. 103.
[6] *ŚB*, 9.5.1. 18.

sacrifice required, as Lévi and Keith pointed out, an intercession of the Ṛṣis in order to make it accessible to men. Remembering this, we shall not be any more shocked by the fact that a work of Brahmā for which the author of the mythological account claims the name and essence of the Veda could have descended on the earth only through a visionary power of a Ṛṣi. For whatever contains in itself a grain of *satya* (reality or truth) comes to men through that mystic faculty of seeing *satya*—a faculty incarnate as a Ṛṣi.[1] A Ṛṣi who is an intermediary between the gods and men or more generally between the truth and men. In order to fulfil this particular task of his he has to disclose whatever he 'saw' to men and put it to practice so that through its success he will be universally recognised.[2]

According to the last chapter of the *NŚ*, *Nāṭya* became known to men only after the *bharataputras* had erred in heaven and caused their own subsequent banishment to the earth by the wrathful Ṛṣis.[3] There are reasons to discredit this account as inconsistent with the general tenor of Chapter I of NŚ. To begin with, all events described in it take place already on the earth (*Jambūdvīpa*). Secondly, Indra clearly requested a *sārvavarṇika* entertainment thus indicating that it was required for men as well. If in such a situation the gods kept it for themselves then Indra's demand would have remained unfulfilled and his refusal to practice it illogical. Thirdly, if *Nāṭya* created by a god was designated for the gods then the help of the Ṛṣis would have become less necessary and once more the gods would have not declared themselves unable to perform it. Finally, the Ṛṣis would have not fulfilled their task of conveying it to men. In this connection the last chapter of NŚ goes even so far as to claim that the descent of *Nāṭya* on the earth happened actually against the will of the Ṛṣis, who banished it there only after a ridicule made of them by the *naṭas* caused their rage. Further we are made to believe that all this took place leaving the Ṛṣis absolutely ignorant of what was happening. For it is in the answer to their query that they are told by Bharata about their own wrath as responsible for the degrada-

[1] Ghurye (*IS*, p. 19 and 27), on the authority of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, says that knowing Brahman one becomes a Muni.

[2] Lévi, *DS*, p. 149.

[3] *NŚ*, XXXIV.

tion of the actors and for the descent of *Nāṭya* on the earth. This news must have surprised them a trifle. Last but not least, if we accept that Chapter I of NŚ is a product of a human hand we shall have to admit that the description of the *Nāṭyotpatti* was given in an effort to explain the actual existence of theatre among humans. This legend, as it is recounted in Chapter I, being obviously a complete story does not warrant a doubtful device of leaving almost half of the most important events to be given an account of only at the end of the treatise. Concluding these remarks we shall stress that since all the events of the *Nāṭyotpatti* have already happened on the earth, therefore, we have to speak not so much about the descent of *Nāṭya* but rather about its becoming the property of men.

Men as the only beings capable of implementing properly the wondrous creation of Brahmā are conceived of as the hundred sons of Bharata. According to Abhinavagupta Bharata's hundred sons were just his big family,[1] and their names are painstakingly listed because fame is dear to every actor.[2] Abhinava's interpretation has two shortcomings. First it does not convincingly enough explain why a big family should have been denoted by a round figure of hundred. Why was it not sixty thousand like in the case of Sāgara also a muni.[3] Further it explains unconvincingly as well, the puzzling list of these hundred names of the *bharataputras*. Abhinava says in this connection that their names indicate the character of the roles which should be given to them.[4] This is a rather vague explanation since in some cases it may appear difficult to determine what kind of a characteristic feature the name denotes—for instance, Pañcaśikha, Triśikha, Śikha. On the other hand giving to men names derived from some special feature of their characters or bodies was a common practice never limited to actors alone. Besides some of

[1] *HABh*, p. 110. Putting forth his point of view Abhinava criticises an attempt to understand this problem symbolically denoting hundred different elements of theatre. The attempt is clumsy indeed, yet, it indicates that the question was not settled and appeared puzzling to many. Modern interpretations of this problem, never elaborate, on the whole follow Abhinava's interpretation usually adding that it is not family *sensu stricto* which is meant here but a troupe of actors, a tribe, or actors in general.

[2] *HABh*, p. 115.

[3] Hopkins, *EM*, pp. 121-2, 187.

[4] *HABh*, p. 115.

the names, as noted by Ghosh, belong to concrete persons connected with the history of theatrical criticism. He points out six such cases and writes that some at least of the so called sons of Bharata might in fact have been the authors who wrote on dramaturgy, histrionic art, dance and music etc.[1] In this light Abhinavagupta's explanations appear less satisfactory.

It seems that the proper understanding of the implications of the figure one hundred will furnish a key to correct interpretation of this problem. For it is reasonabie to suppose that the author of the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend, usually thoughtful, would not have used this figure lightly in an atmosphere in which it had a deep significance.

According to the Āitareya Brāhmaṇa a hundred (verses) should be recited for one desiring life and a thousand should be recited for one desiring heaven.[2] As if in the form of an explanation the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa adds that a hundred only should he recite ; man has hundred years of life,...a thousand should he recite, a thousand is all.[3] ŚB often repeats that man has a life of a hundred years, hundred powers, and a hundred energies as contrasted with the gods who were born with a life of thousand years in the heavenly world equal in extent to a thousand.[4] The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad characterising Puruṣa says that He has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet.[5] RV says that the horses yoked to Indra's cart are a thousand.[6] Finally ŚB declares a thousand to be everything and to mean all.[7] Thus thousand clearly stands for the unmeasured, the infinite, and for heaven.[8] As contrasted to it, hundred denotes that which is human since as RV has it a hundred years were appointed for the life of man.[9] Generally speaking in the Brāhmaṇas the words *sahasra* and *śata* are obviously contrasted, the former denoting the divine and the

[1] *NŚ. MMG*, p. LXIV, p. 6.
[2] Keith, *RBr. AK*, II. 17, p. 146-7.
[3] *op. cit*, XI, 7, p. 411.
[4] *ŚB*, 5.4 1 .13; 4.3.4.3; 5.5.4.27 ; 11.1.6.15; 13.1.3.1.
[5] *ŚUp*, 3.14. p. 401.
[6] *RV*, 6 4.4. 18.
[7] *ŚB*, 4.6.1.15 ; 7.5.2.13; 8.7.4.11 ; 7.4.2.32.
[8] Wilson, *RV*, III, p. 473.
[9] *RV*, I. 14.5.9.

latter the human enunciations.[1]

This was the intellectual background when the relevant portion of the *Nāṭyotpatti* legend was formulated. Such state of affairs seems to exclude the possibility of a purposeless presence of a figure hundred in the text. On the contrary, our contention is that it is the most important element here. The pedantic list of hundred names seems to have a good analogy in the existence of an equally pedantic lists of *sahasranāma* Viṣṇu and Śiva.[2] Our list is most obviously a similar *tour de force.* Its composition indicates a considerable effort on the part of a name-maker to find a hundred suitable names. Some of them are clearly a word-play—for instance: Vitaṇḍya, Tāṇḍya, Pañcaśikha, Triśikha, Śikha, Kartarākṣa, Hiraṇyākṣa, Puṇḍrākṣa, Puṇḍranāsa, or Vidyujjihva and Mahājihva. The other are simply the names of the *rasas*: Bhayānaka, Bībhatsa. Raudra and Vīra and still some other are the names of these six theoreticians of *Nāṭya.*[3] Therefore, we are inclined to believe that these hundred concrete names were made up by someone who did not realise that the true substance and meaning of the passage was fully expressed in the concept of *putraśatam.*

The knowledge of *Nāṭya*—that lovely visual sacrifice, was revealed by Brahmā to fulfil the aesthetic desire of gods and men. Gods depend on the sacrifice of men of which *Nāṭya* is a 'shadow.' Therefore, gods wanted it to be revealed to men. The only way a revealed knowledge can reach men is through the mediation of a Muni or Ṛṣi. This was the way that the Vedas and the Sacrifice descended upon men and this is how the descent of the *Nāṭyaveda* was conceived. Brahmā, therefore, revealed the *Nāṭyaveda* to Bharatamuni. He in turn teaching his hundred sons, i.e., teaching men its principles, did justice to his name Muni and revealed to men one more way to know truth. Thus he became a true mediator between gods and men. In this way *Nāṭya* became the property of men.

[1] Agrawala, *VL*, p. 166.

[2] Sorensen, *IN MBh.* It is obvious that *sahasranāma* stands here for infinity and that the pedantry of the devotees is responsible for putting up these lists.

[3] Numerous readings of this portion of the text seem to suggest that the original list was not considered too important and might have been confusing to those who traditionally handed this text over to their successors.

7

NĀṬYA AND DĀIVĀSURAM

Nāṭya is ready to be put into practice. Brahmā recommends as the most opportune occasion the festival of Indra's Flag Staff commemorating the victory of the gods over the Asuras. Bharata puts on the stage a piece representing the victory of the gods over the Asuras. The gods are delighted. The Asuras are in rage. "Come forward, we shall not tolerate this *Nāṭya*" —they say and resort to *māyā* paralysing speech, movement and memory of the actors. At this moment Indra intercedes and with his staff destroys the demons. Indra's was only a partial success. The demons keep on creating terror among the actors. Bharata seeks Brahmā's help. Brahmā causes a theatre-hall to be built and invests it with the divine defences. This is another important sequence of events related in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya*.[1]

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 53-98.

"*nāṭyasya grahaṇaṁ prāptaṁ brūhi kim karavāṇy aham/*
etat tu vacanaṁ śrutvā pratyuvāca pitāmahaḥ//
mahān ayam prayogasya samayaḥ pratyupasthitaḥ/
ayaṁ dhavajamahaḥ śrīmān mahendrasya pravartate//
atredānīm ayaṁ vedo nāṭyasaṁjñaḥ prayujyatām/
tatas tasmin dhvajamahe nihatāsuradānave//
prahṛṣṭāmarasaṁkīrṇe mahendravijayotsave/
pūrvaṁ kṛtā mayā nāndī hy āśīrvacanasaṁyutā//

....

tadante'nukṛtir baddhā yathā dāityāḥ surāi jitāḥ//

....

tato brahmādayo devāḥ prayogaparitoṣitāḥ//

....

virūpākṣapurogāṁś ca vighnān protsāhya te bruvan/
na kṣamiṣyāmahe nāṭyam etad āgamyatām iti//
tatas tāir asurāiḥ sārdhaṁ vighnā māyām upāśritāḥ/

....

utthāya tvaritaṁ śakraḥ gṛhītvā dhvajam uttamam//

It is evident already at the first glance that the conflict between the gods and the Asuras is a central point of this portion of the story. A theatrical performance of the *dāivāsuram* was preceded by that conflict (*Indramaha* festival is the celebration of the victory of the gods in the *dāivāsuram* war) and was followed by a similar scuffle. The fact that the first performance became a target of the attacks of the demons could have been anticipated. The close relationship of the sacrifice and *Nāṭya* furnishes an obvious enough irritant, especially so when theme of the first performance is the defeat of the Asuras. Further, as we have already noted, the role of Indra in the defence of *Nāṭya* is a replica of his engagement against the Asura-Rākṣasas in the defence of the sacrifice.[1] So far so good, —but what is the reason behind the choice of the *dāivāsuram* as a theme of the first performance? If the title of the first play was, for instance, 'The offering of Soma—the King' or some other such *par excellence* sacrificial theme, then the picture painted in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* would not demand any additional comments. Yet, the fact that the first performance was a representation of the conflict between the gods and the demons complicates the issue.

In Chapter IV of this study we have referred to Dr. Raghavan's theory relating the origins of the ancient Indian theatre to some kind of wrestling competitions which presumably were referring to, or may be picturing, the fights of the gods and the demons.[2] This is a very plausible theory strongly supported by

"*raṅgapīṭhagatān vighnān asurāṁś caīva devarāṭ|*
jarjarīkṛtadehāṁs tān akaroj jarjareṇa saḥ.||

....

prayoge prastute hy evaṁ sphīte śakramahe punaḥ|
trāsaṁ sañjanayanti sma vighnāḥ śeṣās tu nṛtyatām||
dṛṣṭvā teṣāṁ vyavasitam dāityānāṁ viprakārajam|
upasthi to 'ham brahmāṇaṁ sutāiḥ sarvāiḥ samanvitaḥ||
niścitā bhagavan vighnā nāṭyasyāsya vināśane|
asya rākṣāvidhim samyag ājñāpaya sureśvara||
tataś ca viśvakarmāṇaṁ brahmovāca prayatnataḥ|
kuru lakṣaṇasampannaṁ nāṭyaveśma mahāmate||

....

dṛṣṭvā nāṭyagṛham brahmā prāha sarvān surāṁs tataḥ|
aṁśubhāgāir bhavadbhis tu rakṣyo 'yaṁ nāṭyamaṇḍapaḥ||"

[1] See p. 30.
[2] See p. 46. Raghavan, *Vṛttis*, p. 40 ff. Keith, *SD*, p. 24-5.

NŚ itself. But at this juncture we shall refrain from going any further into this problem. In its stead we shall consider the implications of the *dāivāsuram* as a cent per cent mythological event, notwithstanding its concrete historical source.[1]

Sylvain Lévi discusses the problem of the relationship of the Devas and the Asuras in that part of his book which bears the title 'The sacrifice and the gods'.[2] This is not without reason, since according to him that strange ritualistic epopee of the conflict between the gods and the Asuras has as its heroes the priests and as its weapons the sacrifices.[3] The sacrifice — continues later the same author—is a means *par excellence* to attain victory. It is through the sacrifice that the gods succeeded in all their enterprises. 'Everything the gods do, they do through the chanted recitation; the chanted recitation is the sacrifice; it is through the sacrifice that they do it.'[4] Thus also the victory of the gods over the Asuras depends on the sacrifice. But it is by no means one-way dependence. Lévi had over-looked an other aspect of it, i.e., the need to vanquish the demons in order to complete the sacrifice. Discussing the character of Indra we have already quoted some relevant passages of ŚB showing that as much as the victory of gods is safeguarded by the sacrifice, so much so the successful accomplishment of the sacrifice depends on the ability of the gods to repel the demons.[5] The very name of the Rākṣasas, for instance, is determined by their attitude towards the sacrifice. 'While the gods were engaged in performing sacrifice the Asuras and Rākshasas forbade (raksh) them saying, 'Ye shall not sacrifice', and because they forbade (*raksh*) they are called Rakshasas'.[6] On the one

[1] In this respect we share to a certain degree the opinion of Dr. Agrawala who holds that the euhemeristic approach of referring myths to historical basis, may have its value or even factual basis, but hardly touches the fringe of the problem (*VL*, p. 111). We strongly feel that both interpretations may be equally valid, since those responsible for the creation of the myth tried to explain phenomena surrounding them and thus had to keep in view, at least, the basic historical realities of the given phenomenon.

[2] Lévi, *DS*, pp. 36-76.

[3] *op.cit*, p. 45.

[4] *op. cit*, p. 54.

[5] See p. 31.

[6] *ŚB*, 1.1.1.8; 1.1.2.3; 2.1.4.15; 3.3.4.2; 3.5.3.15; 3.6.1. 27.

hand if we are to believe the theologians; the sacrifice should by its sheer force ruin the Asuras.[1] On the other hand the gods have to repel the demons before they enter upon the sacrifice. 'For at that time when the gods were setting out to spread the sacrifice the Rakshasas, the fiends, sought to smite them, saying, 'Ye shall not sacrifice, ye shall not spread the sacrifice'. Having made those fires, those bricks to be sharp-edged thunderbolts; they hurled those at them, and laid them low thereby; and having laid them low, they spread that sacrifice in a place free from danger and devilry.[2]

It follows from above that both the concept of *Yajña* and the concept of *dāivāsuram* are inseparably wedded to each other. Yet this statement, enlightening as it is (since it points the connection between the sacrifice and the *dāivāsuram*) does not fully answer our original question concerning the reasons for the choice of the *dāivāsuram* conflict for the theme of the first performance. In order, therefore, to answer it we shall have to become more familiar with some of the broader meanings of these concepts.

The very definition of the term *Yajña* shows that the central idea of that Vedic sacrifice may be well expressed by the word movement. ŚB holds that sacrifice is born in being spread along and is born moving (*yan jāyate*): hence yan—ja, for *yañja*, they say, is the same as *Yajña*.[3] The sacrifice thus conceived is anterior to all beings[4] but, at the same time, posterior to the Veda. For ŚB says that Brahman, the triple science, is the first born of this All.[5] It is obvious that no *Yajña* can exist without the Veda.[6] It is the Veda that gives order and sense to the movement of *Yajña*. Prajāpati through sacrifice could have become the body of all existing things, only after he put this threefold lore into his own self.[7] The fact that the working of sacrifice is ruled by the Veda, that is to say, the fact that *Yajña* is an organised movement makes out of it an archetypal action,

[1] Lévi, *DS*, p. 44.
[2] *ŚB*, 7.3.2.5.
[3] *ŚB*, 3.2.4.23.
[4] Lévi, *DS*, p. 15.
[5] *ŚB*, 6.1.1.10.
[6] Hopkins, *RI*, p. 187.
[7] *ŚB*, 9.5.2.1; 10.4.2.21.

the actors of which are the gods. This first activity, which signifies the emergence of order from chaos and of dynamic activity out of the womb of stillness or rest[1] dressed up in the intricacies of an elaborate ritual and endlessly repeated by both gods and men became not only a model sacrifice[2] but became also a pattern for everything that happens. For as ŚB puts it, 'this All, indeed, corresponds to sacrifice,[3] or if the sacrifice is conceived as the offering of the Soma oblation into the Fire (Agni), then ŚB will say that Agni became the eater of food and Soma food and the eater of food and food, indeed, are everything here.'[4] Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad faithfully repeats this saying that the whole world, verily, is just food and the eater of food.[5] Further the sacrifice is conceived in the Brāhmaṇas as the universal principle of life,[6] and as the self of all beings and all gods.[7] We can, therefore, safely conclude with Prof. Gonda that the sacrifice, indeed, dictates laws and rules to all happening in the Universe[8] which according to Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya Upaniṣads is itself a huge sacrifice.[9] Keith writes that the identity of the sacrifice and the world is one of the most common ideas of the philosophy of the Veda.[10] Each and every aspect of *Yajña* is reflected in the working of the Universe. Without indulging into practically endless multiplication of examples we shall concentrate only on the one of these aspects of *Yajña* which, it seems, so far escaped attention. That aspect is the *dāivāsuram* in its relation to the sacrifice conceived as a pattern action.

Yajña—an archetypal action, conceived as a mythological happening is constituted by a certain specific sequence of activities or events which form the course of that action-sacrifice. *Dāivāsuram* is one of those activities. Therefore, the relationship between the sacrifice and *dāivāsuram* is that of the relationship

[1] Agrawala, *VL*, p. 148.
[2] Lévi, *DS*, p. 130.
[3] *ŚB*, 3.6.3.1.
[4] *ŚB*, 9.1.6.19.
[5] *BUp*, 1.4.6.
[6] Keith, *RPVU*, 460. Gonda, *AEV*, p. 77.
[7] *ŚB*, 14.3.2.1 and 5 and 11. Lévi, *DS*, p. 38 fn.
[8] Gonda, *NBr*, p. 36.
[9] *BUp*, 6.2.11-13. *CUp*, 5.6.8.
[10] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 435.

between an action and its course—none can exist without the other. This is the essence of the mutual interdependence of *Yajña* and *dāivāsuram*. Once entered upon, *Yajña* faced only one serious challenge and that was from the side of the Asura-Rākṣasas. Thus the strife between the gods and the demons over the sacrifice becomes the crucial moment of the course of an action-sacrifice, and as such becomes its most characteristic element. If we now remember that it is also, as we have shown, a law and pattern for all whatever happens in the Universe, the consequences of it become obvious. Each and every positive action has a *dāivāsuram* as the element of its course. That *dāivāsuram* may manifest itself in an effort to overcome objective difficulties or to overcome a sheer inertia of non-action. Otherwise it can be manifested in a conflict with a concrete negative action running counter to the positive one. This universal conflict accompanying each happening of the creation and symbolised[1] by the *dāivāsuram* has naturally been given a metaphysical import of its own. Born of an uneven distribution of truth and untruth,[2] pervading the universe in the form of day and night[3] and constituting the basic motive of life[4] "the

1 Symbolised—for *ŚB*, 11.1.6.9. says 'Not true is that regarding (the fight between) the gods and Asuras which is related partly in the tale and partly in the legend; ...'

2 *ŚB*, 9.5.1.19-27; "The gods and the Asuras both of them sprung from Prajāpati, entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance, to wit, speech —truth and untruth, both truth and untruth; they both of them spoke the truth, and they both spoke untruth; and indeed speaking alike, they were alike. The gods relinquished untruth and held fast to truth, and the Asuras relinquished truth, and held fast to untruth. The truth which was in the Asuras....went over to the gods. And the untruth which was in the gods.. went over to the Asuras. The gods spoke nothing but truth, and the Asuras nothing but untruth. Now the same truth, indeed is this threefold lore. The gods said, 'Now that we have made up the sacrifice let us spread out this truth'.... But the Asuras became aware of it, and said, 'Having made up the sacrifice the gods are now spreading out that truth; come, let us fetch hither what was ours.' ...The gods espying the Asuras, snatched up the sacrifice and begun doing something else. They (the Asuras) went away......When they had gone away, they (the gods)...completed it; and by completing it they obtained the whole truth. Then the Asuras went down. Then the gods prevailed and the Asuras came to naught."

3 *ŚB*, 11.1.6.11.

4 Agrawala, *VL*, p. 115.

dāivāsuram conflict is a pattern embellished with rich cosmic meaning as the basis of Vedic metaphysical thought."[1]

Before we finally give an answer to the question why the *dāivāsuram* was chosen to be represented during the first performance, we shall first have to review the definition of *Nāṭya* as given in the sixteen verses concluding the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya.*[2] Answering the accusation of the demons holding that Brahmā through the creation of *Nāṭya* has shown partiality to gods despite the fact that both the gods and the demons are equally his sons, Brahmā assures the demons that *Nāṭya* which he has created distributes good and bad fortune to the gods and the demons alike according to their action, condition and association.[3] He continues that *Nāṭya* is the representation of

[1] *op. cit*, p. 121.

[2] *NŚ. KM*, I. 105-120;

"*alam vo manyunā dāityā viṣādas tyajyatām ayam//*
Bhagavatāṁ devatānāṁ ca śubhāśubhavikalpakāiḥ/
karmabhāvānvayāpekṣī naṭyavedo mayā kṛtaḥ//
nāikāntato 'tra bhavatāṁ devānāṁ cāpi bhāvanaṁ/
trāilokyasyāsya sarvasya nāṭyaṁ bhāvānukīrtānam//
kvacid dharmaḥ kvacit krīḍā kacidarthaḥ kvacic chamaḥ/
kvacid dhāsyaṁ kvacid yuddhaṁ kvacit kāmaḥ kvacid vadhaḥ//
dharmo dharmapravṛttānām kāmaḥ kāmārthasevinām/
nigraho durvinītānaṁ mattānāṁ damanakriyā//
klībānām dhārṣṭyajananam utsāhaḥ sūramānīnam.
abodhānāṁ vibodhaś ca vāidagdhyaṁ viduṣām api//
īśvarāṇāṁ vilāsaś ca sthāiryaṁ duḥkhārditasya ca/
arthopajīvinām artho dhṛtir udvignācetasam//
....
uttamādhamamadhyānāṁ narānāṁ karmasaṁśrayam/
hitopadeśajananaṁ dhṛtikrīḍāsukhādikṛt//
....
duḥkhārtānāṁ śramārtānāṁ śokārtānāṁ tapasvinām/
viśrantijananaṁ kāle nāṭyam etan mayā kṛtam/
dharmyaṁ yaśasyam āyuṣyaṁ hitaṁ buddhivivardhanam/
lokopadeśajananaṁ nāṭyam etad bhaviṣyati//
na tac chrutam na tac chilpam na sā vidyā na sā kalā/
na sa yogo na tat karmā yan nāṭye 'smin na dṛśyate//
....
yo 'yaṁ svabhāvo lokasya sukhaduḥkhasamanvitaḥ/
so 'ngādyabhinayopeto nāṭyām ity abhidhīyate//
....
saptadvīpānukaraṇaṁ nāṭyam etad bhaviṣyati/"

[3] This passage agrees with the already quoted passages of *ŚB*, 11.1.6.9.

the state of the Three Worlds which it reflects in its fullness. For in *Nāṭya* exactly as in the Three Worlds at places there is *dharma*, at places amusement, wealth, peace, mirth, fight, love and death. Besides, *Nāṭya* itself is *dharma* to the *dharma*-minded, love to those devoted to love, chastisement to those of unsubdued passions, discipline to those of subdued passions, audacity to the timorous, energy to the valiant, intelligence to those deprived of it, and wisdom to the wise. It is diversion to the sovereigns, perseverance to the suffering, wealth to those who live from wealth, and resolution to the distressed. Continuing this thought Brahmā generalises and says that *Nāṭya* refers to the actions of all men and that it is a source of good instruction. It generates resolution, amusement and happiness. It is also a cessation of all that afflicts the suffering, the toiling, the despairing and the self-mortifying. Further he says that it is conducive to *dharma*, conferring fame, giving long life and increasing intellect. Still further, Brahmā says that there is no such revealed knowledge,[1] no such craft, no such science, no such art, no such device and no such action which is not to be seen in *Nāṭya*. The following verse is a culminating point of the whole characteristic of *Nāṭya* and appears to be the final definition of it,[2] being at the same time only a more precise paraphrase of the opening definition.[3] Here *Nāṭya* is spoken of as the Nature of the World with its happiness and despair expressed by means of the four *abhinayas*. Later on Brahmā will once more stress this aspect of *Nāṭya* saying that it is the representation of the Seven Islands.

This theory underlines the universality of the experience

and 9.5.1.12-27. There can be no partiality for good or evil. This is for what gods and demons stand. Their conflict is otherwise unreal. Thus the play, as Brahmā assures, is only a faithful and objective mirror of the actual state of affairs in the Universe.

[1] There are two readings of this passage. One commonly accepted is *na taj jñānam*. Another is *na tac chrutam*. In the first case *jñāna* and later mentioned *Vidyā* can be confusingly similar in connotation. If the second reading is accepted it will become obvious that it is *jñāna* in its deeper sense meant here. Besides, the fact that *Nāṭya* was created from the Vedas seems to support this reading too.

[2] Varma, *NNN*, p. 46.

[3] We take *trālokyasyāsya sarvasya nāṭyam bhāvānukīrtanam* for the opening definition. *NŚ. GOS*, I. 107.

offered by theatre. But before all it puts stress on the ability of theatre to reflect faithfully the world not only as we see it, but also the same world as we know and comprehend it, *i.e.*, the true nature of the world—its very essence. In the foregoing pages of this essay we have already indicated that it is the sacrifice which can rightly be taken for that nature and essence of the world 'dictating laws and rules to all happenings in the Universe'. Thus it is *Yajña* manifest as existence with its characteristic elements of happiness and despair, which in each case is to be enacted by means of *Nāṭya*. Here we reach the crucial point of our argumentation. The sacrifice is action. Each action has its aim and course. The aim of an action cannot come about without its course and it is the course of action which makes its sense comprehensible and its aim perceptible. Thus *Nāṭya* in order to become a true representation of the nature of the world (which is *Yajña*—the archetypal and eternal action) has to represent its course for which undoubtedly the *dāivāsuram* of our account stands. That is why not only the first performance, but each and every performance is, as a matter of fact, a representation of the *dāivāsuram* conflict. 'For whatever is signified by the Devas and the Asuras has reference to the life of man and the world',[1] and their conflict is the essence of the course of all happenings in the Universe behind which works an eternal *Yajña*.

As we can see now, the prompt attack of the demons which the first performance of *Nāṭya* provoked only supports our conclusion. The gods' defence of *Nāṭya* comes to the same effect, and it is once more an expression of their eternal engagement in the *dāivāsuram* conflict on the side of light, truth, and good as opposed to the Asuras who stand for darkness, untruth, and evil. The author of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* makes the gods' initial defences (Indra's action) only partly successful and at that moment he ingenuously avails himself of one more element which stresses the *Yajña*-like nature of *Nāṭya*. The motivation of the existence of a theatre-hall unmistakably betrays the author's familiarity with the notions of the role played by a sacrificial hall.

So far as we know only two scholars have noticed this simi-

[1] Agrawala, *VL*, p. 115.

larity. Keith mentions that both Vedic religion and Indian drama are singularly sparing in the sacrificial buildings and theatre-halls respectively. Both the sacrifice and drama neither require nor need a fixed building.[1] Such a general similarity does not mean much and the context of this remark shows that its author does not attach any importance to it. The next of the two scholars, C.P. Singh goes much further. He writes, "It has been clearly shown in the description of the stage that the definition of the shape of a theatre-hall given in *NŚ* was made following the pattern of the Vedic sacrificial sheds."[2] Singh obviously speaks here about a theatre-hall as described in the second chapter of *NŚ*. If his remark had been supported with some detailed evidence, it would have corroborated the conclusion which we have independently reached on the basis of the passages of the first chapter of *NŚ*.[3]

As Bharata puts it the sole reason for which a theatre-hall was erected was its role of protection. In both cases of theatre-hall and of sacrificial shed the initial impulse for creating a building was rather pragmatic. It was the need to protect the sacrificial rites as well as performances from the changes of the capricious atmosphere. Abhinavagupta draws our attention to this fact when he says that *Nāṭya-maṇḍapa* was erected in order to ward off all the *Vighnas* like 'wind, heat, and rain which could not be subjected to an ordinary punishment.'[4] ŚB speaks in similar terms about the sacrificial structures. "On this ground they erect either hall or shed...They enclose it on every side, lest it should freeze in winter, lest it should pour in the rainy season, lest there should be burning heat in summer."[5] Later on in both cases this obvious pragmatic need of protection grew into a complicated system of defences against the metaphysical dangers threatening the holy activities of gods

[1] Keith, *SD*, p. 50.

[2] *Bhāratīya Nāṭya Paramparā*, Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Patrikā I-II, Banaras, 1958.

[3] We shall not indulge here in the discussion of this more or less technical problem. This is because we want to remain faithful to the accepted subject of our essay, i.e., the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* and its interpretation.

[4] *HABh*, p. 157.

[5] *ŚB*, 3.1.1.6 and 8.

and men. The meaning and importance given to *Nāṭya* is equal to that ascribed to the sacrifice. This fact suggests that arrangements existed for its safety similar to these made for the protection of the sacrifice.

The whole bulk of ŚB is full of descriptions of all kinds of shelters and enclosures for the safety of the sacrifice often called strongholds.[1] RV speaks about Indra investing the sacrificial hall with defences against an interruption.[2] This role of his is most naturally played in NŚ by Brahmā, to whom Indra ceded many of his Ṛgvedic powers and privileges, when Brahmā—Prajāpati became the highest god of the Brāmaṇical period. Thus in our account it is Brahmā who invests the theatre-hall with the defences against an interruption and stations himself in the stage (I.95). The first to be appointed a protector of the whole building is the Moon-god identical with the wise Soma, the bestower of exhilaration who dwells in the hall of the sacrifice.[3] Soma, the destroyer of Rākṣasas,[4] is prayerfully besought to offer a wide shelter from the wasting enmities wrought by the foes.[5] 'When in my house I watch the enemies of the gods—a believer prays—then, o king, drive away those who hate us.'[6] The next appointment with clear Ṛgvedic associations is that of the Maruts asked to protect the four corners of the building. Maruts in RV are spoken of as the visitants of the hall of offering,[7] and requested to protect the sacrifice,[8] as well as to seize the Rākṣasas, grind them to pieces; whether they fly about like birds by night or whether they have offered obstruction to the sacred sacrifice.[9] The next appointment is that of Varuṇa and Mitra who according to RV protect pious rites[10] and are possessed of the Aṣura subduing strength.[11] 'When you come,

[1] *ŚB*, 1.2.2. 13; 2.1.4.16; 3.3.1.5; 3.4.1.16; 3.5.2.18; 4.3.3.24; 6.4.4.19; 14.1.2.16.

[2] *RV*, 7.2.3.1.

[3] *RV*, 9.1.12.3.

[4] *RV*, 9.1.1.2.

[5] *RV*, 8.8.10 3.

[6] *RV*, 8.8.10.9.

[7] *RV*, 1.11.7.11.

[8] *RV*, 7.3.3.7.

[9] *RV*, 7.6.15.18.

[10] *RV*, 5.5.7.7.

[11] *RV*, 5.5.10 2.

Varuṇa and Mitra, to the delightful place of sacrifice, then supporters of men, destroyers of foes, you bring felicity'.[1] Mitra and Varuṇa are also said to exterminate those who, emulously contending, disturb the rites.[2] Further both of them together with Aryaman (absent from our account) are said to be magnified in the hall of sacrifice.[3] *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa* says that it is by means of Mitra and Varuṇa that they smite the Asuras and the Rākṣasas,[4] and *RV* adds, 'Mitra and Varuṇa...may we thus behold your golden (forms) in our halls of sacrifice...'[5] Finally the two gods are invited to sit down in this substantial and elegant hall (built) with a thousand columns.[6] Undoubtedly the most significant is the appointment of Vahni (Agni), who is asked to protect the stage. We have already discussed some aspects of Agni's 'personality' as shown in the *Nāṭyotpatti* mythological account. Here we shall specially underline these aspects of his 'appointment' which clearly bring out the analogy between *Yajña* and *Nāṭya maṇḍapas*. The stage of the theatre-hall is called a *vedikā*, *i.e.*, a sacrificial ground or altar and is presided over by Vahni; according to RV, the minister of the sacrifice',[7] the lord of the mansion placed upon the sacred (altar) whence wisdom is derived,[8] who conveys to the gods the offering that has been reverently sanctified.[9] Further Agni is said to be himself the oblation and the sacrifice.[10] Such Agni, the invoker of gods, dwelling on the altar,[11] the brilliant symbol of sacrifice,[12] is besought by the worshippers to protect them from odious Rākṣasas[13] and is said to ornament with his rays the spacious chambers of sacrifice.[14] RV places Agni on the altar,

[1] *RV*, 5.5.11.2.
[2] *RV*, 6.6.6.9.
[3] *RV*, 7.4.5.5.
[4] *ABr*, VI.4.
[5] *RV*, 1.20.6.2.
[6] *RV*, 2.4.9.5.
[7] *RV*, 6.1.15.14.
[8] *RV*, 6.2.2.42.
[9] *RV*, 2.1.3.11.
[10] *RV*, 10.2.4.6.
[11] *RV*, 4.4.9.5.
[12] *RV*, 6.4.6.2.
[13] *RV*, 7.1.1.13.
[14] *RV*, 3.1.3.2.

the navel of earth[1] and speaks about him as dwelling in the sacrifice[2]—nay, as identical with it.[3] These all are the implication which the appointment of Agni brings into *Nāṭya-maṇḍapa* where that *par excellence* slayer of Rākṣasas[4] is made to reside in the central point—the stage. Further, the two groups of the gods, *i.e.*, the Ādityas and the Rudras are mentioned among the protectors of a theatre-hall. RV praises the divine Ādityas, the protectors of the Universe,[5] the givers of dwellings,[6] by whose protection we have continually possessed enjoyment from old.[7] Ādityas are besought utterly to destroy the worshippers' enemies[8] and to protect as with armour their votaries.[9] Rudras on the other hand are extolled as munificient mighty Rudras, who in the sacrificial hall are wise (even) in the exhilaration (of the Soma)[10] and who are powerful.[11] Finally Indra whom we know as a defender of the sacrifice and who takes place by the side of the stage, is said to inspect the rite and to regulate the performance of the sacrifice when the ceremony is being prepared in the hall of sacrifice.[12]

The gods mentioned above[13] are spoken of as the defenders against the demons and are associated in one or the other way

[1] *RV*, 3.1.5.9.
[2] *RV*, 8.10.9.11.
[3] *RV*, 10.2.4.6.
[4] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 158.
[5] *RV*, 2.3.5.4.
[6] *RV*, 2.3 5.11.
[7] *RV*, 8.7.8.16.
[8] *RV*, 8.7.8.21.
[9] Keith, *RVBr*, p. 99. Interesting in this connection is the following passage of *ŚB*, 4.3.5.9. They enter (the Havirdhāna) together—the *Adhvaryu*, sacrificer, *Agnīdhra*, *Pratiprasthātṛi*, *Unnetṛi* and whatever other attendant (of the *Adhvaryu*) there is. They close both doors—for (the Adityas) were afraid of the Rākshasas. This passage puts in a doubtful light the supremacy of the Ādityas over the demons, but at the same time it shows that the Havirdhāna structure was considered a defence against the Rākṣasas.
[10] *RV*, 8.2.2.12.
[11] *RV*, 5.4.10.4.
[12] *RV*, 8.3.1.30.
[13] Besides those listed above there are some other gods and minor deities who are already known to the Vedic and Brahmanic mythology (Kāla, Kṛtānta, Nirṛti, Apsarases and Gandharvas, see Macdonell, *VM*. although in our case they do not seem to have been specially

with the sacrificial hall. So much so that the RV calls all the gods the dwellers in the chamber of worship.[1] It is impossible to think that these gods detached from their Ṛgvedic identity found their way into the theatre-hall. The source of inspiration of the author of the *Nāṭyotpatti* account seems to be only too obvious. We shall not, therefore, run a great risk if we assume

distinguished by any achievement either directly in the *dāivāsuram* or in the defence of the sacrifice and the sacrificial shed. These, and all other gods and demigods like Lokapālas, Mahodadhi, Bhūtas, Guhyakas, Nāgas and Yakṣas might have found their way into the theatre-hall later when that hall began to acquire features of a symbol of the Universe. These were probably acquired by a theatre-hall under the influence of a cosmogonic trend already known to *RV* which regards the Universe as the result of mechanical production, the work of the carpenter's and joiner's skill, (Macdonell, *VM*, p.11. Keith, *MAR*, p.17) for the poets of the *RV* often employ the metaphor of building in its various details, when speaking of the formation of the world (*Ibid.*) The analogy of the stage and the altar which is arranged to represent earth, atmosphere and heaven (Keith, *RPVU*, p. 466) would have been enough to consider a theatre-hall an image of the Universe. Yet this is not the only element suggesting such a symbolical equation. Some of the elements were already brought in by the appointments of the Vedic gods and the other elements were added later. The whole building was constructed by Viśvakarmān, a creative agency of Brahmā, earlier identified with that god. (*op. cit*, p. 207) Soma-Candramas, truly to his role as the ruler of this world (*RV*, 9.4.18.3) protects the whole building. The Lokapālas protect and reside in its side. The presence there of Varuṇa and Mitra is another important indication of this symbolism. For Varuṇa and Mitra make the sun cross the sky, the rain fall, and send the dawns. All physical order is subject to the control of Varuṇa with or without Mitra; the law of Varuṇa holds earth and sky apart; the three heavens and the three earths are deposited within him; heaven, earth, and air are supported by the two gods; the wind is the breath of Varuṇa. By his ordinances the moon moves at night and the stars shine. He embraces the nights and establishes the mornings. He regulates seasons (*op.cit*, p. 97) Further the Pannagas guarding the bottom of the stage were before, on the creation of the universe, appointed by Brahmā to their office under the earth which they had to uphold from below (Hopkins, *EM*, p.24) Nirṛti and Mṛtyu are made two doorkeepers in accordance with the role of the first of them who was termed an exit from life (*op. cit*, p. 109) The threshold of the door of the theatre-hall is Yama's rod of justice, personified as a Daṇḍa a form of Yama himself. (*op. cit*, p. 112) Thus the theatre-hall densely populated with the gods resembles very closely, indeed, the universe, which it most probably symbolises.

1 *RV*, 6.5.2.9.

that in the eyes of the author of that legend the importance of whatever happened on the stage demanded, so far as its safety goes, similar arrangements to these made for the safety of the sacrifice. For both the sacrifice and the performance of *Nāṭya* have similar metaphysical import and are exposed to similar metaphysical dangers.

Part III

THEATRE AND ACTION

8

THE SACRIFICE (YAJÑA)[1]

An action deserving its name has to have its 'actor', its course and its aim—these elements give sense to a particular movement which thereby becomes an action. The foregoing chapter of this study left us with the conclusion that the sacrifice is an archetypal action. This conclusion followed an analysis which showed that sacrifice, since it is controlled by a primordial principle of the Threefold Lore, is an organised movement or motion. Discussing this problem we said nothing about other requirements which an activity has to satisfy before it claims the appellation of an action. We can easily guess that the sacrifice fulfils these demands. It answers the description of an action both as a complicated ritualistic operation and as a mythological happening. Our concern, of course, is with the sacrifice conceived as a mythological happening. This is so because in the eyes of theologians of the sacrifice each element of the ritual follows certain practices established by a mythological sacrifice, of which the actual ritualistic sacrifice is a faithful reproduction.[2]

The gods are the 'actors' of the sacrifice. They spread, perform and complete it.[3] In the mythological portions of the

[1] The analysis offered in this chapter owes its inspiration to the analysis of action carried out in *NŚ*.

[2] The whole bulk of the Brāhmaṇas is full of remarks that this or that is done in such and such a way for the gods did it that way. "Now with the *Yajus* the gods first performed the sacrifice, then with *Rik*, then with *Saman*, and in like manner do they now perform the sacrifice. ŚB, 4.6.7.13.

[3] *ŚB*, 1.1.2.3; 1.2.1.6; 1.3.1.5; 1.4.4.8; 3.3.3.16; 3.3.4.2; 3.5.3.15; 3.6.1.27; 3.7.2.2; 3.9.4.6; 4.2.4.19; 4.6.6. 1; 6.3.1.29; 7.3.2.5; 9.2.3.3; 9.5.1.12 ff; 9.5.1.29.

Brāhmaṇas the gods are made to execute the sacrifice.[1] In this manner our first requirement of an 'actor' of the sacrifice has been met by the role that has been assigned in it to the gods.

The second problem to be analysed is the course of an action-sacrifice. Whatever happens, for even the shortest duration of time, it must follow some course of events which make up the whole of this happening. There must be somewhere its beginning, its duration and somewhere its end. *Yajña* is not only not an exception to this most obvious rule but it appears even that it is the very sacrifice that should be accounted for its existence. Yet before we shall venture any general conclusion, let us first review the course of this mythological action-sacrifice in its most important stages. This course, according to our analysis, has the following distinct elements. They are: desire, effort and continuation, obstruction and conclusion or fruition. But let the *Brāhmaṇas* speak for themselves. "The gods *desirous* of smiting death, the evil, and *desiring* identity of world and union with Brahman saw this *Abhiplava* six-day (rite).[2] "Prajāpati *desired*, 'Would that I obtain all my *desires;* would that I attained all attainments'. He beheld this three-days Soma-sacrifice, the *Aśvamedha* and took possession of it, and sacrificed with it."[3] "Bṛhaspati *desired*, 'May the gods have faith in me, and may I become their *Purohita*." He saw this (rite) of twenty-four nights, he grasped it and sacrificed with it."[4] "The Sādhya gods, *desirous* of heaven saw this (rite) of six nights. They grasped it and sacrificed with it."[5] "Bṛhaspati *desired*, may I be resplendent'. He saw this rite of eight nights, he grasped it and sacrificed with it.[6] "Prajāpati *desired*, 'May I be an eater of food', He saw this (rite) of seventeen nights, he grasped it, and sacrificed with it."[7] Finally let us quote RV, which says that "In the beginning there was *desire* which was

[1] The Ṛṣis are also said to sacrifice but usually they follow the lead of gods. Lévi, *DS*, pp. 122,144. Keith, *RVBr*, p. 148. *ŚB*, 11.2.3.7.

[2] Keith, *RVBr*, p.462.

[3] *ŚB*, 13.4.1.1.

[4] Keith, *RVBr*, p. 599.

[5] *op. cit*, p. 572.

[6] *op. cit*, p. 574.

[7] *op. cit*, p. 575.

the first seed of mind."[1] Summarising we can say that the first element without which an action cannot come about is a desire of an 'actor' to act. It is because of the desire of the fruits of an action that an 'actor' embarks upon it. In the mythological accounts of the Brāhmaṇas it is usually expressed by the sacramentally used verb *kam.*[2] There is no sacrifice without desire. So much so that it seems to be a *raison d'être* of the sacrifice. The sacrifice is termed 'wish-fulfilling'.[3] The sacrifice (Aśvamedha) contains all objects of desire[4] and "Verily, whosoever performs the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice obtains all his desires and attains all attainments."[5] "Prajāpati created the sacrifice; with it when created the gods sacrificed; having sacrificed with it they obtained all desires."[6] The relationship of the sacrifice and desire is best described by Keith, who writes that 'the use of sacrifice is to exhaust desire through the enjoyment of desires.'[7] Desire, one of the characteristic features of action thus emerges as equally characteristic feature of the sacrifice.

An actual effort to begin and to continue an action is the next aspect, the presence of which in the course of the sacrifice has to be pinpointed. It is by no means a difficult task. The sacrifice is performed, spread or entered upon. Here usually the verb *yaj* is used as sacramentally as in the former case the verb *kam.*[8] On one occasion ŚB becomes more eloquent when describing the nature of performing a sacrifice. Yet at the same time it avoids strict ritualistic terms and describes that action in general mythological terms. "The gods Agni, Indra, Soma, Makha, Vishnu and the Viśve Devah, except the two Aśvins, performed a sacrificial session. They entered upon the session thinking, 'May we attain excellence, may we become glorious,

[1] *RV*, 10.11.1.4.

[2] Lévi, *DS. Bṛhaspatir akāmayata...* ..(p. 110), *Prajāpatir......prajākāmo bahuh* . . . (139), *te devā akāmayanta* . . . (p. 51), *so 'kāmayata yajñam sṛjeyeti* . . . (p. 18) *Sarvasenih Śāuceyo' kāmayata* . . . (p. 122), *Vaśiṣṭho hataputro 'kāmayata* . . . (p. 148).

[3] *ŚB*, 11.1.6.20.

[4] *ŚB*, 13.5.2.9.

[5] *ŚB*, 13. 4.1.1.

[6] Keith, *RVBr*, p. 514.

[7] Keith, *AA*, 13. p. 199.

[8] Lévi, "*Bṛhaspatir...tenāyajata*" (p. 110) "*Prajāpatir...sagre yajata...*" (p. 139), "*devāḥ...tābhyām ayajanta...*" (p. 57).

may we become eaters of food'...They spake, 'Whoever of us through austerity, fervour, faith, sacrifice and oblations, shall first encompass the end of the sacrifice, he shall be the most excellent of us, and shall be in common to us all".[1] It is through *śrama*, *tapas*, *yajña*,[2] and *āhuti* that the sacrifice is accomplished.[3] These terms signify the concrete effort of gods to perform the sacrifice and to continue performing it. Their steady effort would have soon brought the sacrifice—that archetypal action to its conclusion, if it had not been that Prajāpati first created the gods and the Asuras; thereafter the sacrifice was created.[4] Since then, that force of the Asuras eternally alien to the gods has invariably disturbed the sacrifice of the gods. "For the gods when they were performing the sacrifice were afraid of a disturbance on the part of the Asuras and Rākṣasas."[5] In ŚB this formula is repeated almost twenty times. This shows that the Asuric force of darkness and evil has unceasingly been engaged against the action of the gods. Sometimes the gods in order to defend themselves construct ramparts, strongholds or enclosures.[6] Sometimes they hurl bricks at the Asuras[7] or employ any other conceivable means of defence. In one case it was a false pretence that the gods did something else which saved their sacrifice from the eightfold attack of the demons.[8] In other cases they entrust the defence to one of the gods. It is sometimes Agni who in RV is a protector from the odious Rākṣasas.[9] But most often it is Indra whom RV extolls in the following words: "Let (thy car), Indra drawn by the horses (rush) downwards (upon the Asuras): let thy destroying thunderbolt fall upon enemies; slay those that assail in front or in rear, or that fly (from the combat); make the universe (the abode of) truth; (let such power be concen-

[1] *ŚB*, 14.1.1.1. and 3 and 4.

[2] Considering its context the word *yajña* means here 'offering, oblation', not 'sacrifice'.

[3] Lévi, *DS*, pp. 54, 70, 144.

[4] Keith, *VBYS*, 3.3.7.1, p. 259. Lévi, *DS*, p. 28n.

[5] *ŚB*, 1.1.2.3.

[6] *ŚB*, 6.3.3.24; 6.14.4.19; 14.1.2.16.

[7] *ŚB*, 7.3.2.5.

[8] *ŚB*, 9.5.1.12ff.

[9] *RV*, 1.1.1.13. *ŚB*, 1.2.2.13.

trated in thee."[1] "The sound (of thy bolt) has been heard by the approaching foes; hurl upon them the consuming thunderbolt, cut them by the root, oppose Maghavan, overcome, slay the Rākṣasas, complete (the sacrifice)."[2] Indra does not remain indifferent to these supplications and when "...the gods were afraid— 'the Asuras will take from us this morning sacrifice, just as those that have more force and might.' To them said Indra, 'Fear not, against them in the morning shall I hurl my thunderbolt..."[3] We have already mentioned that Indra especially was requested by the gods to defend the sacrifice (Ch. III). Crowned by them as their king[4] and called the deity of the sacrifice.[5] Indra is undoubtedly the leading hero of the sacrifice and as such the chief 'actor' of the action-sacrifice.[6] As we have already pointed out (Ch. VII) and as we still more clearly can see it now, the disturbance of the sacrifice by the demons is a culminating point of the course of the action-sacrifice.

This leaves us with the last stage at which the action-sacrifice is finally completed. There are many instances when the gods are actually said to complete the sacrifice.[7] This aspect of the whole problem hardly needs any more comments. After all what we have said it is obvious that a successful completion of the sacrifice is a must, without which the sacrifice loses its deepest meaning. This is why Indra is asked to complete the sacrifice,[8] and this is why the staff is planted with the words: "Stand up, o tree, erect, guard me from injury on to the goal of this sacrifice." Explaining this passage ŚB says that "whereby

[1] *RV*, 3.3.1.6.

[2] *RV*, 3.3.1.16.

[3] Keith, *RVBr*, p. 146, *ii*.16.

[4] *ABr*, 37. 1.

[5] *ŚB*, 1.4.1.33; 1.4.5.4 ; 3.4.3.1.8; 4.2.3.10; 4.2.5.17....

[6] The following passage of ŚB may be of interest here. "Forsooth, we (gods) are in evil plight, the Asura-Rākṣasas have come in between us: we shall fall prey to our enemies. Let us come to an agreement and yield to the excellence of one of us. They yielded to the excellence of Indra, wherefore it is said: Indra is all the deities, the gods have Indra for their chief." (*ŚB*, 3.4.2.2).

[7] For instance: *ŚB*, 9.5.1.27; the root saṁstha (Lévi, p. 40n. *ŚB*, 14). 1.1.4 ; '*yajñasyodṛcaṃ pūrvo' vagacchāt* (Lévi, *DS*, p. 70n).

[8] *RV*, 3.2.4.16.

he means to say 'standing erect protect me till the completion of this sacrifice.[1]' " This insistence of the texts that the sacrifice has to be completed directs our attention towards the purpose and the true meaning of the sacrifice. For if this meaning were limited to a prayer and an oblation, then it would have been obvious that it is better to offer half of an oblation and an unfinished prayer than nothing at all. Yet in the case of *Yajña* prayers and oblations are only tools serving a more important cause. The Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa says that Prajāpati having changed himself into the sacrifice, gave himself over to the gods.[2] Eggeling as if continuing this thought writes, "By offering up his own self in the sacrifice, Prajāpati dismembered, and all those separated limbs and faculties of his come to form the Universe—all that exists, from the gods and Asuras (the children of the father Prajāpati) down to the worm, the blade of grass and the smallest particle of inert matter. It requires a new, and ever new sacrifice to build the dismembered Lord of Creatures up again and restore him so as to enable him to offer himself up again and again, and renew the universe, and thus keep up the uninterrupted revolution of time and matter."[3] This metaphysical meaning of the sacrifice was most clearly expressed in the Brāhmaṇas on the occasion of discussing the *Aśvamedha*. ŚB says, "Prajāpati's eye swelled; it fell out; thence the horse was produced...By means of the *Aśvamedha* the gods restored it to its place; and verily he who performs *Aśvamedha* makes Prajāpati complete."[4] We have already quoted a passage of ŚB in which a performer of *Aśvamedha* is said to obtain all his desires and to obtain all his attainments.[5] Besides, *Aśvamedha* is said to contain all objects of desire.[6] At the first glance it seems that there is some dis-

[1] *ŚB*, 3.2.1.35.

[2] Caland, *PBr*, 7.2.1. p. 134.

[3] Eggeling, *ŚB*, v. iv. p. xvii. The idea of the dismembered Prajāpati, and this or that sacrificial act being required to complete and replenish him occurs throughout the incubrations of the Brāhmaṇas,—continues Eggeling. According to Keith we owe to Eggeling the clearest exposition of the doctrine of sacrifice. Keith, *VBYS*, p. CXXVI.

[4] *ŚB*, 13.3.1.1; The same passage occurs in Caland, *PBr*, XXI. 4.2.; and Keith, *VBYS*, p. 428; V. 3.11.

[5] *ĀB*, 13.4.1.1.

[6] *ŚB*, 13.5.2.9.

parity between the aim of the performers of the sacrifice and the metaphysical sense of the same sacrifice. Yet this disparity disappears under investigation. Sacrifice fulfills all desires. ŚB is very explicit about it. Whatever the gods desire,[1] whatever the Ṛṣis desire and whatever the sacrificer desires[2] all that is fulfilled through the sacrifice. This power of the sacrifice, despite all other pretences, is well rooted in its metaphysical significance. It is not a blind belief in the power of a rite but it is the metaphysical meaning of the rite which makes it all-powerful. Some light upon this problem is thrown by a passage of the *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* already quoted in some other connection. It may however bear a repetition here for the sake of clarity. "The gods, desirous of smiting away death, the evil, and desiring identity of the world and union with Brahman, saw this *Abhiplava* six-day (rite); by this *Abhiplava* they approach, and having smitten away death, the evil, obtained identity of the world and union with Brahman; verily thus also the sacrificers approach by the *Abhiplava*, and having smitten away death, the evil, obtain identity of the world and union with Brahman."[3] Thus an identity of the world with Brahman, equality with him and unity with him, as the Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa puts it,[4] are the desired objects of the sacrifice. A desire of identity and union implies the existence of variety or multiplicity and separation—viz. implies the dismemberment of the one Prajāpati. Multiplicity and separation give birth to desire. The sacrifice is designed so as to overcome that multiplicity and separation at the very root of it—viz, it is conceived as the reconstruction of Prajāpati's dismembered body. Once the multiplicity and separation cease to exist, the desire having been thus fulfilled disappears as well. That is to say, once the dismembered body of the Lord of the Creatures has been reconstructed, the universal metaphysical cause of the existence of desire in any form and scale and at any place disappears. This is why the desires of those who perform the sacrifice are fulfilled; for each small desire is nothing less than an individual expression of one and the same thirst to overcome the duality of existence and to

[1] *ŚB*, 11. 1. 6. 20.
[2] *ŚB*, 1. 6. 2. 7.
[3] Keith, *RVBr*, p. 462.
[4] Caland, *PBr*, 25. 18. 6. also *ŚB*, 11.4.4.2-7.

integrate with the Supreme.[1] This contention strictly follows a conception of the sacrifice as a law and rule-giver to all happening in the Universe.

Having concluded that *Yajña* is an archetypal action we have at the beginning of this chapter posed the three following questions: (I) Is there any 'actor' of this action sacrifice? (II) What is its course? and (III) What is its aim? To the first question we have answered in the affirmative naming the gods as the 'actors' of the sacrifice. The answer to the second question is a trifle longer. The course of the mythological action-sacrifice has the following invariable succession of events or elements: (A) desire, (B) effort as well as continuation denoted in the sacrifice by *śrama*, *tapas*, *śraddhā*, *yajña* and *āhuti;* (C) obstruction marked by an attack of the Asura-Rākṣasas; (D) its overcoming and completion of the sacrifice. An answer to the third question is that the import and aim of the action-sacrifice is a mystical reconstruction of the body of the Lord of Creatures and through it the fulfilment of all desires. In other words it is an integration of the multiplicity of existence and metaphysical merger in Supreme Being.

Concluding, we have to stress that since *Yajña* claims to be the pattern for all happening in the Universe, then the elements of it outlined above will naturally remain a true expression of the Universe as well. On the other hand, since *Nāṭya* claims to be the representation of the true state of the Three Worlds and as such claims to deserve the name of the sacrifice itself (*ijyā*, NŚ.V.108), then these elements of the sacrifice have to be represented by *Nāṭya*. In the subsequent pages we shall try to show that *Nāṭya* has been conceived so as to be a correct representation of the world and as such it well deserves to be called sacrifice.

[1] Duality of existence, — for the meaning of the sacrifice can also be expressed as an integration of the two principles (Agrawala, *VL*, p. 150). Usually those two are symbolised by Agni and Soma. vide *ŚB*, 1. 6. 3. 23. and 24.

9

THE PLOT (*ITIVṚTTA*)

NŚ calls *itivṛtta* the body of *Nāṭya* and divides it into five *sandhis* or junctures.[1] Both the meaning of the *itivṛtta* and the significance of the *sandhis* have to be well investigated before there is laid any claim to the proper understanding of this brief enunciation. Most of the material of NŚ consists of strictly technical observations and its author or its authors rarely ventured into the purely speculative domains of the sources and justifications of all formulae recorded in NŚ. Chapter XIX of it, dealing with the structure of the plot (*itivṛtta*), is not an exception to this rule. Below we shall make an attempt to reconstruct the theoretical reasoning underlying the concept of the *itivṛtta*.

Nāṭya is not a motionless picture of the Universe but it reflects the dynamic nature of the world characterised by incessant flux of happiness and despair.[2] A motionless picture fails to reveal the state of happening. It merely reflects static situations. The need to reflect that flux of joy and sorrow postulates an existence of a means of expression which itself will have motion or movement for its nature.

Explaining the word *itivṛtta* Abhinavagupta contrasts it with the word *vṛtta* and says that the body of a poetic composition which is not suitable to be enacted consists of *vṛtta*. On the other hand this which possesses a form suitable for the stage has its body in the form of *itivṛtta*. *Iti* here means that *vṛtta* was prearranged in a certain particular way, proper for the

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX, 1.
Itivṛttaṁ tu nāṭyasya śarīraṁ parikīrtitam|
pañcabhiḥ sandhibhis tasya vibhāgaḥ saṁprakalpitaḥ||
[2] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 119.

theatre.[1] Abhinava's analysis suffers from two shortcomings. First of all, his distinction between *vṛtta* and *itivṛtta* is rather ambiguous and does not seem to be acknowledged elsewhere. There is nothing to suggest that at the time NŚ was composed, *vṛtta* was used not only in the sense suggested by Abhinavagupta but even as a word different in any other way.[2] The second objection relates to a reference to the special arrangement of the plot in a play as distinct from that of a poem. A plot of an ordinary *kāvya* certainly requires the same arrangement. SD insists that the *mahākāvya* should contain all the dramatic junctures (*sandhis*).[3] Consequently it appears that one cannot speak about two different types of a plot—one for *kāvya* and another for *Nāṭya.* The more so, because NŚ consequently calls the script of a play *kāvya* equating it thus with any other poetical composition.[4] For all these reasons the distinction introduced by Abhinavagupta appears to be immaterial. We in our turn propose a more general interpretation of the term *itivṛtta* on the same lines as the well known derivation of the word *itihāsa. Itihāsa* means 'so indeed it was.' As the verb *vṛt* means 'to occur, to happen' so the meaning of the term *itivṛtta* will be 'so it happened'. In our case the term does not refer so much to the past, as to the substance of each happening. This is supported by the dictum of NŚ which having listed the five stages of action says: "these are the five successive stages of every action begun by persons desirous of fruit."[5] As we have said, *Nāṭya* represents happening or becoming and technically speaking *itivṛtta* is its tool designed so as to represent faithfully that happening. *Itivṛtta* dressed by a poet

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, v. III. p. 1, "*kāvyamātrasya anabhineyasya tāvad vṛttāmātraṁ śarīraṁ, naṭanīyasya tv abhineyarūpasya iti evaṁprakāratayā yad upaskṛtaṁ vṛttaṁ ata eva itivṛttaśabdavācyaṁ tad vastu śarīraṁ.*"

[2] At the most the word *vṛtta* can be taken for a sub-division of *itivṛtta.* See *NS. GOS*, XIX. 4 and 24.

[3] Ballantyne, *MC*, p. 265, 559, (VI. 315-25).

[4] According to Kane, *HSP*, p. 355, *kāvya* and *nāṭya* are regarded synonymous. This is not true. For *Nāṭya* stands for the whole performance and *kāvya* for a text of play only. Kane has been misled by careless scribes who often changed *nāṭya* into *kāvya.* See *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 1

[5] *NŚ. MMG*, 21. 14; *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 14.
sarvasyāiva hi kāryasya prārabdhasya phalārthibhiḥ|
etās tv anukrameṇāiva pañcāvasthā bhavanti hi||

in an attire of a concrete story and expressed through acting can truly be called the body of *Nāṭya*.

Judging from the first glance, we have made in the foregoing analysis a serious omission, for we have practically reduced the concept of *itivṛtta* to the bare five *avasthās*. In order to find out whether such an omission is admissible we shall have to review in detail the whole *itivṛtta* concept of NŚ.

It goes without saying that there are three principal elements of the plot. They are the five *avasthās*, the five *arthaprakṛtis* and the five *sandhis*. Yet the opening verse of Chapter XIX of NŚ (in spite of its having all features of the basic definition of the plot) does not mention either the *arthaprakṛtis* or the *avasthās* and rests satisfied with the *sandhis* alone. Such a situation demands closer investigation of the mutual relationship of all three elements of the *itivṛtta*.

The problem is by no means simple; for almost invariably the first impression, is, as Keith puts it, that the classification of elements of the plot is perhaps superfluous beside the junctures.[1] Or as Pandit Chattopadhyaya prefers to say when speaking about the relationship of the *avasthās* and the *sandhis*: "the purpose of this twofold enumeration of this practically identical phenomenon is not clear." Further this question appears to him wrapped in a good deal of obscurity which seems to force him to abandon it as it is.[2] Our own presumption is that the enunciations of the NŚ in this particular case are a result of a careful inquiry into the true nature of that 'happening' which *Nāṭya* is to represent.

Discussing this problem, we shall adopt the same order in which the three elements are discussed in NŚ. This is because in our understanding this order reflects their particular interdependence.

Each and every action has according to NŚ the following five stages:

Beginning (*ārambha*): "That part of the play (lit. composition) which merely records eagerness about the final attainment of

[1] Keith, *SD*, p. 299.

[2] K. Chattopadhyaya, The *sandhis* or the five parts of a Sanskrit drama, The Allahabad University Magazine, vol. VI, No. 1, October 1927, p. 15.

the result with the reference to the Germ is called the Beginning."[1] Eagerness or desire (*āutsukya*) is the main aspect of the Beginning. It is recorded at this stage of action. Effort (*yatna*): "(Hero's) striving towards an attainment of the result when the same is not in view, and showing further eagerness about it, is called the Effort."[2] A concrete, so to speak, physical effort, to obtain the fruit is the most characteristic feature of this stage of action. Possibility of attainment (*prāptisambhava*): "When the attainment of the object is slightly suggested by an idea, it is to be known as the possibility of Attainment."[3]

So far we have not departed from the widely accepted mode of interpretation of the definitions of the three foregoing *avasthās*. Such an approach and such an interpretation have been followed by scholars without any significant exception, beginning with Dhanañjaya and Abhinavagupta right to this day. Yet in the case of the fourth *avasthā* we feel obliged to contest the opinion of all these scholars. For they seem to automatically follow an initial misinterpretation of the text of NŚ. The passage in question runs as follows: "*niyatāṁ tu phalaprāptiṁ yadā bhāvena paśyati / niyatāṁ tāṁ phalaprāptiṁ saguṇāṁ paricakṣate//*.[4] The meaning of the word *niyata* is here the proverbial bone of contention. Wrong in our view is the traditional interpretation of that word in this particular case as *niyata—niścita*—sure – certain. Even Abhinava follows the general trend and explains *niyatāṁ niyantritāṁ—phalāvyabhicāriṇīṁ*, taking obviously *niyatāṁ* for 'fixed, established, settled, sure'; *niyantritāṁ*—for 'controlled' and *phalāvyabhicāriṇīṁ* for 'not separated from fruit'. Finally contradicting some other opinions according to which *niyatā* signifies doubt with reference to the achievement of fruit, Abhinava does not leave any doubt about his own position and contrasts *niyatā* with *sandigdhā* asking

[1] *NŚ. MMG*, 21.9, "*autsukyamātrabandhas tu yad bījasya nibadhyate/ mahataḥ, phalayogasya sa phalārambha iṣyate//*

[2] *NŚ. MMG*, 21.10, "*apaśyataḥ phalaprāptiṁ vyāpāro yaḥ phalaṁ prati/ paraṁ cāutsukyagamanaṁ sa prayatnaḥ prakīrtitaḥ//*

[3] *NŚ. MMG*, 21.11, "*īṣātprāptir yadā kācit phalasya parikalpyate/ bhāvamātreṇa tāṁ prāhur vidhijñaḥ tāṁ prāhur vidhījñaḥ prāptisambhavam//*

[4] *NS. GOS*, XIX. 12.

how these two contradictory terms can denote the same thing.[1] Yet in spite of this attitude Abhinava has to admit that at this stage of action the achievement of fruit is endangered (and consequently doubtful), for he sees the state of being endowed with the actions countering the disruption as one of the elements of the material of the *niyatāpti* stage of action.[2] Naturally an existence of danger implies an existence of doubt as to the bringing of an endangered action to a desired fruition. In such a way Abhinava negates his own approach. Paraphrasing his own saying one can ask how can there be anything certain and at the same time endangered. DR presents a similar approach. Dhanika explaining Dhanañjaya's definition gives the following example from Act III of the *Ratnāvalī* which is supposed to illustrate the *niyatāpti* stage of action. "Vidūṣaka—'it is now very difficult for Sāgarikā to live'.......King—'My friend, I do not see any other remedy in this matter than to conciliate the queen."[3] This example is undoubtedly rightly criticised by Shastri who unhappily stops short of questioning the whole definition of the *niyatāpti avasthā*. Instead he proposes another example, this time from Act III of the *Śakuntalā*. "Śakuntalā—'O friends, I think about the versification (of love) but my heart is trembling from the fear of being rejected by him (the king)'......Friends—'O friend you are slighting your own good qualities. Who in this world would prevent (from coming to himself) the autumnal moon which delights (tranquilises) his own body, with the end of the cloth (with a cloth)?"[4] He offers the following comment on this example. "Here the obstacle was the fear of rejection in the mind of Śakuntalā. This obstacle is removed by her friends and there is sure success in her love affair. This is therefore a *niyatāpti*."[5] Śhastri's criticism of the first example rests on the fact that considering the uneasy character of Vāsavadattā all that the king can expect is a dim shadow of hope, and there-

[1] *op. cit*, v. III. p. 7-8 "*ye tv akārapraśleṣād abhāvena niyatāṁ sandeham iti vyacakṣate, te niyatā phalaprāptiḥ saṁdighā cet katham etad viruddkaṁ saṁgacchatām iti praṣṭavaḥ*/"

[2] *Ibid* "*phalasya prakarṣeṇa āptir yataḥ sahakārivargaḥ pratibandhaka-vidhvaṁsanasahitatā ca sāmagrīrūpataḥ*......"/

[3] Shastri, *DR*, p. 27.

[4] *op. cit*, p. 28.

[5] *Ibid*.

fore, the situtaion is far from being certainty of success.[1] Our own criticism of this example agrees with one offered by Shastri. It may be useful also to add that this, as SD calls it, absolute confidence of obtaining the object[2] not only is totally absent from the given example but this very situation is separated from the final attainment of fruit by such events as an attempt of Sāgarikā to commit suicide, her imprisonment by the queen and finally the fact that she appeared almost to have perished in the conflagration of the palace. The conclusion is obvious. The true *niyatāpti* stage (in the traditional interpretation) has to be looked for, sometime after the conflagration of the palace appeared to be an artifice of a magician. The only difficulty is that this portion of the story undoubtedly is the *phalāgama* stage. Thus the definition offered by Dhanañjaya, Abhinavagupta, Viśvanātha and others make fourth stage of action practically identical with the last one. Similar criticism applies to Shastri's own example. To begin with, the *avasthās* have to be delineated with reference to a hero and not to a heroine. Secondly the desired fruit of the hero is not a singular union with Śakuntalā (in such case the play would end with Act I) but accepting her as a lawful wife whose son will be a successor to the throne. The particular situation described in Shastri's example does not suggest that the attainment of this fruit, from which this situation is separated by many events which hardly leave any hope of the final desired fruition, has become certain. Here also in search of the true *niyatāpti* stage we shall have to move as far as at least the recovery of the ring or better as far as the meeting of Duṣyanta with his son Bharata in heaven. Thus once more the *niyatāpti* stage will appear identical with the *phalāgama*. For it is obvious that absolute certainty of success can come about only when an action aiming at that success is not any more endangered. Otherwise the *niyatāpti* stage, as exemplified above, will be a recurrent event of overcoming the obstacles. This is absurd because the *avasthās* are stretches of action touching or even slightly overlapping each other. They have never been conceived as recurrent incidents.

[1] Shastri, *DR*, p. 27.
[2] Ballantyne, *MC*, p. 195.

Among the modern scholars, Pandey discusses this problem in detail. Pandey's chief aim is to give a proper exposition of the aesthetic theories in perfect fidelity to the original texts. As he declares himself that with respect to the *itivṛtta* problem, he follows the interpretation of Abhinavagupta.[1] Abstract theories usually make sense till they are confronted with practice. Abhinava gave a slip to this rule and did not quote any example in support of his definition.[2] Pandey tries to make up for this lack and retells as an example of the *niyatāpti* stage of action half of Act III and the entire Act IV of the *Ratnāvalī.* He takes as a starting point a passage already quoted in DR and SD. He dismisses the whole sequence of subsequent events and unhappy developments with an assertion that it would be undramatic if the reconciliation attempted by the king would have resulted in an immediate union.[3] The true *niyatāpti* stage according to Pandey begins with the entrance of Vijayavarman in Act IV and lasts till practically the end of the play. The *phalāgama* stage according to him does not take much time. "In the present case—he writes—it is represented by the attainment of sovereignty by the king and his union with Ratnāvalī."[1] Pandey brings to a logical conclusion the faulty definition of Abhinavagupta. As we have already pointed out, this definition equates practically *niyatāpti* with *phalāgama*. Pandey solves the dilemma by limiting the *phalāgama* stage to the final one or two minutes of action during which the hero appears as a sovereign and as happily married to Ratnāvalī. Yet he overlooks one very important factor and that is the fact that we first hear about

[1] Pandey, *IAe*, p. XI.

[2] In all fairness to Abhinava we have to admit (although we question his interpretation) that in not quoting any example he did the only proper thing. This is because the concept of the *avasthās* does not have any independent existence. It is a purely theoretical concept, which can be exemplified only after it is supplemented with the concept of the five *arthaprakṛtis*, and thus evolves into the concept of the five *sandhis*. The five *avasthās* picture the structure of pure and fully abstract action. The five *sandhis* picture the regularities of action in real surroundings. Therefore the examples can be given only in the last case. We in our turn decided to continue the discussion in the terms of examples since it had been started in this form, yet we are fully aware of the inconsistency of it.

[3] Pandey, *IAe*, p. 418.

[4] *op. cit*, p. 420.

the attainment of sovereignty from the mouth of Vijayavarman right at his first entrance. Thus the *phalāgama* begins with his entrance and as we see corresponds exactly to the *niyatāpti* interpreted as certainty of success.

The foregoing discussion clearly indicates the necessity of an overall revaluation of the whole problem. The already quoted definition of the *niyatāpti* stage of action does not indicate whether the word *niyata* should be translated as 'suppressed' or as 'sure', 'certain'. In our view the following arguments speak for the first alternative.[1] As we have seen, the hitherto accepted interpretation when brought to its logical conclusion practically excludes the last *avasthā* (*phalāgama*), which according to NŚ has to be present along with the first one in the form of the first and the last *sandhis* in absolutely all plays.[2] Besides, the old interpretation inadmissibly dilutes the conflict so that there is hardly any place left for it in a play. From the very beginning a hero will steadily approach his aim without any really serious setback. After the Possibility of Attainment (*prāpti-sambhava*) comes immediately the Certainty of Success (*niyatāpti*) which is followed by the Attainment of Fruit (*phalāgama*). Despair (*duḥka*), which according to the definition of *Nāṭya* has to be present in it, is totally absent from such a theoretical play.[3] Yet as if yielding to this obvious requirement, supported also by dramatic practice, Abhinavagupta, Dhanika, Viśvanātha and others mention in the course of their discussion the existence of the element of disruption at the *niyatāpti* stage.[4] Nevertheless, for them the true *niyatāpti* stage seems to follow the overcoming of difficulties. This unnatural shift of stress is, of course, forced upon them by their wrong interpretation of the word

[1] In this meaning the word *niyata* is used in MBH and in *kāvya* literature. See M. Williams Dictionary. K. Chattopadhyaya takes *niyatāpti* for 'restrained attainment'. Allahabad University Magazine. Vol. VI. No. 1. October 1927, p. 15. The word *niyata* was a source of controversy for philosophers also. Jha in his translation of the *Tattva-kāumudī* offers a following comment on the fourtieth kārikā (p. 95). "The word *niyata* translated in the *kārikā* as lasting is differently interpreted by Narayana Tirtha (in his Sāṁkha-candrikā). He takes it in the sense of "restricted", i.e., the Subtle Body is restricted to one particular Spirit."

[2] *NŚ. MMG*, 21. 18. and 44-6.

[3] *NŚ*, I, 119.

[4] Shastri, *DR*, p. 27. Ballantyne, *MC*, p. 195. etc.

niyata. Once this word is taken in its negative meaning of 'suppressed', 'curbed' or 'restrained', then a conflict in a play carrying with itself an element of despair gains a legitimate and prominent place in a drama. Such an interpretation is also justified from the point of view of an emotional reaction. The joy of a final victory is immensely augmented when contrasted with the very-near-to-defeat situation which precedes it.

In the *Ratnāvalī* the *prāptisambhava* stage ends at the close of Act III with the entrance of Vāsavadattā. The queen sends Sāgarikā, who only a moment ago was rescued from the noose by the king, to prison. So far the success was, as NŚ wants, sometimes in hand and sometimes out of the reach of the hero.[1] The notorious passage of the *Ratnāvalī* quoted so often is the most perfect example of the *prāptisambhava* stage of action (or of the *garbhasandhi*). The queen has gone away in anger, yet there is still a possibility of reconciliation, and of the king's achieving the union with Sāgarikā behind the queen's back. Such a chance comes immediately when the king discovers that vāsavadattā, whom he has just saved from committing suicide, is in reality Sāgarikā in disguise. Having discovered her identity the king hastens to embrace her closely. Sāgarikā is his. But alas,—the queen enters unexpectedly and having caught them *in flagranti* orders an imprisonment of both his beloved and his friend Vasantaka. With one powerful stroke of adverse fate, all is destroyed. The king is left in utter despair. The attainment of the fruit of his endeavours is suppressed. The *niyatāpti* stage begins.[2] It lasts till the entrance of Vijayavarman with the news of the conquest of Kośala,

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 41. Yet this situation does not imply any real obstruction. Simply the search for fruit may sometimes be misleading and then a mother-of-pearl is taken for gold. But finally the search is successfully concluded and only then a real disaster, like the imprisonment of Sāgarikā for instance, comes.

[2] It will be interesting to compare in this connection the last verse of the third act of the *Ratnāvalī* with the definition of the *vimarśasandhi* which it perfectly illustrates and by the same concerns the *niyatāpti avasthā*.

> "*kiṁ devyāḥ kṛtadīrgharoṣam uṣitasnigdhasmitaṁ tan mukhaṁ/*
> *kiṁ vā sāgarikāṁ kramoddhataruṣā santarjjyamānāṁ tathā/*
> *baddhyā nītam ito vasantakam ahaṁkiṁ cintayāmy adya bhoḥ sarvākārakṛtavyathaḥ kṣaṇam api prāpnomi no nirvṛtim//* III

For the definition of *vimarśasandhi*, see p. 188.

which for Udayana signifies an attainment of the desired sovereignty and which announces the advent of the *phalāgama*. Half of the fruit becomes his and at the same time it is a ray of hope of the attainment of the other half, i.e., union with Sāgarikā which, as Pandey wants, does not come immediately but only after an artificial conflagration heightens the effect of the final happy ending.

Act IV of the *Śakuntalā* closes with a happy note. For in spite of certain slight apprehension as to the final result, which *prāptisambhava* stage in one or another form always leaves (in the *Śakuntalā* it is the curse of Durvāsa), we watch a happy scene of a beloved daughter leaving her father's home in order to join her lawful husband. In Act V Kālidāsa, as if trying to augment the shattering emotional impact of the indifference of the king, shows him in the happy and care-free surroundings of his court. But the clouds gather slowly and with the question of the king—'*kim idam upanyastam*'[1]—the situation reaches its climax. Yet it does not immediately affect the hero himself, who through the curse of Durvāsa is made unaware of the true identity of Śakuntalā. The *niyatāpti* situation thus sinks slowly into the abyss of perfect despair which is brought about in Act VI by the miraculous recovery of the royal ring. It is then that the king who now abhors the delightful wails:

> "Was it a dream, a magic spell,
> A dark delusion, or the blight
> Of some good deeds, rewarded once?
> I do not know; it's passed forever,
> A deep and dark abyss, in which
> My heart's most precious hopes were plunged."[2]

The fruit is almost completely suppressed. The *niyatāpti* situation is in full swing and lasts till the arrival of Mātali, the charioteer of Indra, who apprises the hero of the favourable disposition of gods towards him. Thus hope is born that the gods rewarding the king's services will help him out of his despair. Kālidāsa never ends his *avasthās* as abruptly for instance as Harṣa. This shows his superior mastery of composition. He introduces them gradually, and gradually conducts

[1] Śak. V. after 16 verse.
[2] Wells, *SSP*, p. 260.

them to a close. The *niyatāpti* situation of the play finally ends only with the king's recognition of Bharata and his mother. Yet this event belongs also to the last *avasthā*, which has been announced by Mātali's entrance and which lasts after the scene of recognition for the remaining half of Act VII.

Śūdraka is no lesser master in the difficult art of composition than Kālidāsa. At the end of Act V we see Cārudatta and Vasantasenā united happily, although there is still a lot to be done in order to legalise their union and to ensure its lasting delight. This moment of high hopes and serenity is separated from the burning despair of Act IX by a superb gradation of events which binds the two *avasthās* together, and which gives credit to the way Śūdraka put into practice a dry injunction of NŚ describing *Nāṭya* as the representation of the world with its happiness and despair. The close of Act V signifies the end of the *prāptisambhava* stage of action. The opening of the trial scene in Act IV is the beginning of the *niyatāpti* stage. Act VI styled "The exchange of carriages" at the beginning still reflects the hopeful atmosphere of the *prāptisambhava* situation. The first sign announcing the gloomy events of the *niyatāpti* stage soon comes when Vasantasenā in a hurry mistakes the carriage of Śakāra for that of Cārudatta. Now, as Vasantasenā is carried away towards the fatal confrontation with Śakāra the situation progressively deteriorates.[1] The subsequent two acts further develop the situation. In Act VII Cārudatta impatiently awaiting his beloved offers his help to Āryaka escaping prison and we abandon our hero at the close of the act full of apprehension and worry for the absent Vasantasenā. With this scene the *prāptisambhava* situation definitely ends. Act VIII already belongs to *niyatāpti* stage of action. Here the base machinations of Śakāra not only cause the death of Vasantasenā[2] but are also a prelude to the trial of Cārudatta resulting in the death sentence for the hero himself. This is the *niyatāpti* stage in its lowest ebb. It is carried as far as about two-thirds of Act X,

[1] The story of Āryaka is a *prakarī*. His successful escape in which Cārudatta is made to help him is an element of *bindu* which will finally relieve the hero of his suffering and bring about the desired fruit of the union with Vasantasenā and the restoration of wealth.

[2] The *prakarī* of the Buddhist mendicant reviving Vasantasenā is another manifestation of the *bindu*.

when a hangman is shown standing with a risen sword over Cārudatta's head. It ends with the entrance of Vasantasenā announcing as well the advent of *phalāgama* situation.

Before finally closing this review of the *niyatāpti* theory as reflected in the works of the dramatists we shall discuss one more case in which the author seems to pay tribute to the dramatic possibilities offered by such a concept of the *niyatāpti.* The *Uttararāmacharita* of Bhavabhūti is a challenge to the mistaken views of the later theoreticians. This drama possesses the longest known *niyatāpti* stage of action. As a matter of fact it is the *niyatāpti* that makes it up. Leaving only a short portion of the whole play, i.e., the first act of it for a very condensed review of the three initial stages,[1] the *niyatāpti* stage begins at the end of it with the entrance of the spy Durmukha, who announces the dissatisfaction of the people and their disbelief in the purity of Sītā, and with the following words of Rāma full of despair, "The world of living beings is now turned upside down; the purpose of Rāma's life is at end today. The earth is now a sterile withered wilderness; worldly life is without interest; full of worry is the body. I have no refuge left. What can I do? What course is opened to me?"[2] This stage lasting for four acts of the play ends in the last act with the entrance of Arundhatī and Sītā.[3] The rest of the last act is the *phalāgama* stage. It is of course difficult to insist but it might have been that the criticism that Bhavabhūti had to face was caused by his partiality for the *niyatāpti avastha* and his disregard of the commonly accepted interpretation of that term.

The last *avasthā* is termed the acquisition of fruit. NŚ defines it as follows: "When the desired, full and suitable fruit of action comes about in the plot—it is known as the acquisition of fruit."[4] The last stage, like the three initial ones, does not

[1] Bhavabhūti utilises here skilfully an ingenuous device of the picture gallery where Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmana recall to memory their past adventures preceding the happening of the play and constituting the first three stages of action.

[2] *URC*, I. after 46 verse.

[3] *URC*, VII. 18.

[4] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 13.

"abhipretaṁ samagraṁ ca pratirūpaṁ kriyāphalam/
itivṛtte bhaved yasmin phalayogaḥ prakīrtitaḥ//

provoke any special controversy and therefore does not demand any special comments. We can, therefore leave it at that.

NŚ states that every action has to have these five stages arranged according to the order they are mentioned in the text.[1] A glance at them is enough to know that this concept concerns an 'actor', *i.e.*, expresses the course of action from the point of view of an 'actor' or doer. Each action consciously undertaken by its 'actor' has to be carried through these five stages. They, of course, may be of different duration and importance. Nevertheless, for a doer, there will always be a moment at which there is a desire born in him to do this or that. Next comes concrete effort to achieve the purpose for which an action was embarked upon, followed by the possibility of success. Yet before the final victory there is always a stage at which there is as actual attempt of an adverse force to disrupt an action, or at least, as NŚ says, 'a possibility of such a disruption present in the mind of an 'actor'.[2] Thus an action stripped of all its specific distinctions, of all its side effects and of all its accidental complications is reduced to a concept of pure action. Such a concept borders on physics and reminds of the vectors of force known to the world of physics. They picture the direction and strength of a particular force but they say little about all these complicated effects accompanying a concrete force applied in concrete conditions of the physical world. The five *avasthās* mark out a similar vector common to all actions. It has a definite successward direction and its length consists of the five definite stages. Yet it says very little about what happens when an 'actor' becomes a concrete human being. When his action takes place among other concrete human beings and when there are at work all other complicated human factors playing a role far from negligible, when an action happens in the concrete world. An action characterised by the five *avasthās* is reduced to the most basic element of progress which carries an 'actor' towards the achievement of fruit. The *avasthās* are in fact an expression of a progress of action and as such they mark out five elements resulting from a vertical division of a horizontal

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 14. "*etās tv anukrameṇāiva pañcāvasthā bhavanti hi//*"
[2] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 12 "*...yada bhāvena paśyati/*"

vector of action running from the point at which an action begins towards its completion.

The discrepancy between this purely speculative linear diagram of action and an actual course of action as it is to be observed in reality must have prompted the theoreticians to a further analysis, which would actually show all regularities of an intricate process, which every real action undoubtedly is. In other words they attempted to outline the breadth which a purely linear vector of the five *avasthās* will acquire in case the force which it pictures is applied in a 'contaminated' environment of the reality. The regularities observed during that analysis have been put in the form of the five *arthaprakṛtis*, *i.e.*, fivefold nature of the matter or of business.[1]

Abhinavagupta conducts his reasoning concerning the *arthaprakṛtis* on similar lines.[2] He also considers the scheme of the

[1] Keith (*SD*, p. 298-9) and Ghosh (*NŚ*, p. 382) translate this term as 'the five elements of the plot'. Ballantyne (*MC*, p. 191) puts it as 'the five sources to the end'. Shastri (*DR*, p. 24) says that 'they are called *arthaprakṛtis* because they are the leading source or occasion of the grand object of a drama." Pandey calls them the means to the end' (*IAe*, p. 420). Last but not least Dr. Raghavan names them 'the five elements of the story' (*SL*, p. 50). Our own interpretation of the word *artha* in this compound is based on the famous sūtra of Chapter VI of *NŚ*, *'na hi rasād ṛte kaścid arthaḥ pravartate'*, which we understand as declaring that there is no such matter (in *Nāṭya*) which does not bear *rasa*. This is broadly what Abhinavagupta seems to say (*HABh*, p. 441). Ghosh's interpretation (*NŚ*, p. 105) "No meaning proceeds, from speech, without, any kind of, Sentiment." does not seem to be warranted by the context. For there is nothing in it which would suggest that the word *artha* should be connected with speech. The word *prakṛti* we take in its basic and simplest meaning of nature.

[2] In this matter ND strictly follows Abhinavagupta. SD's and DR's opinions are very brief and not original, and therefore, negligible. Śāradātanaya's view of the *arthaprakṛtis* seems to be wholly (and not altogether wrongly) dominated by the concept of bindu; for BP uses the definition of *bindu* to describe the nature of all five *arthaprakṛtis* (*kathābhedasya hetavaḥ*). Yet this description does not mean that all five are present in the entire play. On the contrary, he places *bija* at the beginning, *kārya* at the end, *bindu* in between. Only for *patākā* and *prakarī* an option in usage is allowed. Śāradātanaya makes out of the *arthaprakṛtis* a kind of links in a play and therefore his definitions seem to duplicate the scheme of the *avasthās*. Bhoja offers a very original interpretation of the *arthaprakṛtis*. He says, as Dr. Raghavan puts it, that the whole universe of action can be analysed into the agent or doer (*kartṛ*), the act

five *avasthās* an insufficient definition of the *itivṛtta* and says that the form of a conflict present there cannot be known from this scheme only. It is, therefore in order to show 'the form of the complete collection of means' of that conflict that the concept of the five *arthaprakṛtis* is introduced. For when the *arthaprakṛtis* are not described and consequently without the proper understanding of the means the ultimate significance of the five stages of action would not be properly comprehended. From these deliberations emerges Abhinava's final definition of the *arthaprakṛtis*, where *artha* means 'fruit' and *prakṛti* of it denotes the means. In other words they are 'the causes of fruit'.[1] At

(*kriyā*), the object (*karman*) and the means (*kāraṇa*). These four can thus be restated in Bharata's language into five *arthaprakṛtis*: *Bīja*, the seed and its sowing; *Bindu* or continuity; *Patākā* and *Prakarī* contributory or helping events, major and minor; *kārya* the end (Raghavan, *BSP*, p. 597). Original as this view is, it seems to be somewhat forced upon the scheme of five *arthaprakṛtis*. The relationship between *kartṛ* and *bija* for instance is not too convincing (*kathāśarīravyāpakenāyake kartari karmaṇi vā avatiṣṭhamānaḥ ārambhaḥ bījam iti ucyate* (*Ibid.*)) The most obvious appears to be the connection between *bindu* and *kriyā* (*evam vicchinnāvicchinneṣu kathāśarīreṣu yo'nusandhatā sa bindur ity ucyate* (*Ibid*). *Patākā and Prakarī* in turn are rightly considered the means (*kāraṇa*). But they obviously are only some of the means, for their presence in the *itivṛtta* is optional. One is tempted to ask what will be the means if these two are not to be found in a play. Bhoja's treatment of *kārya* as the object (*karman*), i.e., the fruit achieved by the hero does not differ from commonly accepted interpretation of this *arthaprakṛti*. Yet in the light of NŚ's definition of it, it does not seem to be correct. The principal error of Bhoja lies in his effort to accommodate within the concept of the *arthaprakṛtis* the 'actor' or '*kartṛ*' and the fruit. Action pictured through the elements of *itivṛtta* is a movement, and therefore both 'actor' and his aim as static elements cannot be considered within this scheme but should be taken as causes conditioning an action, so to speak, from outside. For action is a process which unites an 'actor' with his aim, i.e., with a fruit of his action.

[1] "...*tatra ca upāyatatsahakārivargapratibandhatvaṁ tadvidhvaṁsanaṁ ca upakṣiptaṁ tatra tatsvarūpaṁ na jñātam iti upāyasāmagrīsvarūpaṁ darśayitum āha......tad anabhidhāne upāyādi svarūpāpari jñānāt prārambhādy avasthānāṁ paramārthato 'saṁvedane ādhikārikatvam aviditaṁ syāt/ yatra arthaḥ phalaṁ tasya prakṛtaya upāyāḥ phalahetava ity arthaḥ/*". Here Abhinava introduces a slightly scholastic division of the *arthaprakṛtis*. He divides all of them into non-rational (*jaḍa*) and rational(*cetana*). *Bīja kārya* and belong to the first group. *Bīja* is called a leading cause (*mukhyakāraṇabhūta*) and *kārya* a more hidden one

the first glance this definition seems to be as good as ours. Yet we shall insist that it is much less precise than the one we have suggested. The cause or means cf gaining fruit convey an idea of few separate devices employed here and there by a hero, so that he may attain his purpose. The *arthaprakṛtis* defined in such a way do not represent the totality of the *itivṛtta* in a similar way to the scheme of the *avasthās* but seen from a different angle. That Abhinava holds the first view and opposes the one, which we hold, becomes abundantly clear when he discusses a theory put forth by some earlier authority, which he quotes and refutes. According to that authority *artha* stands for the 'entire (expressed) meaning of a play' and *prakṛti* stands for its 'sections or the divisions of the limbs of such *artha*'. Abhinava begins his criticism saying that such an interpretation would make *sandhis* acquire the features of the *arthaprakṛtis* and would make *itivṛtta* itself an assemblage of *arthaprakṛtis*. Further he says that *artha* in such interpretation is identical with *itivṛtta* and therefore it is superfluous to introduce the word *artha*. Besides the similarity of the description of the *arthaprakṛtis* to that of the *avasthās* renders the first a description for description's sake.[1]

It becomes obvious from Abhinava's criticism that he does not admit the existence of the two equally total yet different aspects of the same *itivṛtta*.[2] Although it is difficult to say whether exactly such an admission constituted the basic premises of the approach criticised by Abhinavagupta, yet it may

(*guḍhatara*). The rational *arthaprakṛtis* are further subdivided into chief (*mukhya*) and auxiliary (*upakāraṇabhuta*). *Bindu* is the first. The auxiliary *arthaprakṛtis* are termed either co-operating for its own sake (*svārthasiddhi*), Patākā, or for another's sake (*parārthasiddhi*) Prakārī. (*NŚ. GOS*, v. III. p. 12).

[1] "*anye tv āhuḥ—arthasya, samastarūpakavācyasya prakṛtayaḥ prakaraṇāni avayavārthakhaṇḍā ity arthaprakṛtayaḥ—etac ca vyākhyānaṁ na atīva prakṛtaṁ poṣayati|*

sandhyādīnām api ca arthaprakṛtitvam atra vyākhyāne syāt, itivṛttam eva samudāyarūpam|

artha itivṛtte prakṛtaya iti vaktavye 'rthagrahaṇam atiriktaṁ syāt, ity avasthābhiś ca tulyatāvarṇanaṁ varṇanamātraṁ syād iti kim anena|" *Ibid.*

[2] In spite that he writes, "*itivṛttaviṣaye yathā yena prakāreṇa adhikārikasya khaṇḍanalakṣaṇena pañcāvasthā uktāḥ tenāiva prakāreṇa arthaprakṛtayo' pi pañcāiva paṭhyante|*" *Ibid.*

be taken for granted that the exponent of these views did not explicitly identify *arthaprakṛtis* with either *sandhis* or *avasthās*; for such an identification could not possibly escape Abhinava's attention and his available criticism shows that in such a case he would discuss it extensively.

Now, before we begin our review of the *arthaprakṛtis*, we shall first try to answer Abhinava's criticism which has been offered above.[1] Summarising the discussion of the five *avasthās* NŚ says that each and every action (*kārya*) has to have all five of them.[2] We shall strictly follow this injunction if we conclude that the full appellation of an *avasthā* is *kāryāvasthā*. Further we are told that as the *avasthās* so the *arthaprakṛtis* are present in the *itivṛtta*.[3] Thus if we accept the criticism of Abhinava concerning the superfluity of the word *artha* consequently we shall have to consider as equally superfluous the above mentioned injunction of NŚ which puts the concept of *kārya* in a similar position to that of *artha* interpreted as the entire expressed meaning of a play. The more so, because there can be no doubt that the scheme of the five *avasthās* concerns the whole *itivṛtta* and therefore the existence of some sort of identity between the *kārya* of the fourteenth *śloka* and the *itivṛtta* cannot be questioned. Here we approach the crucial point of the whole problem. In our view both *kārya* (action) and *artha* (matter or business) are identical with the *itivṛtta*. They both denote *itivṛtta* in the same way in which the two words, i.e., crowd and multitude of people may be said to denote the same phenomenon each time stressing its different aspect; but each time describing it in its totality. In our case *kārya* stresses the progression of the plot or its aspect of motion, of becoming or happening. *Artha* in its turn stresses the quality of that progression or movement. In other words the *kāryāvasthās* answer a question—where to? and the *arthaprakṛtis* furnish an answer to a question—how to? Thus both

[1] We shall deal here with two problems only, viz., superfluity of the word *artha* and identity of the *avasthās* with the *arthaprakṛtis*. Our point of view regarding the '*arthaprakṛtiness*' of the *sandhis* will become clear later when we shall discuss the character of the *sandhis* themselves.

[2] See p. 100.

[3] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 20, "*itivṛtte yathā avasthāḥ pañcārambhādikāḥ smṛtāḥ/ arthaprakṛtayaḥ pañca tathā bījādikā api//*"

the *kāryāvasthās* and the *arthaprakṛtis* are mirroring the *itivṛtta* in its entirety but each does it from a different angle.

Abhinavagupta's definition of *bīja* is a rather faithful elaboration of NŚ's short formula. He holds that such a thing which at the beginning of a play, due to an absence of an awareness of its deep motive, is feared to be little and insignificant; which is sown through a dialogue and which invariably develops into fruit and which ever since spreads in many ways and extends by all means, is called *bīja* (seed or germ). The *bīja* proceeds with the spirit of gaining fruit even if the success or fruit itself has been obstructed. It is deposited like a seed by the first insertion and in accordance with place, time and propriety. Finally an action (*kārya*) based upon numerous means takes place for its sake according to a rule of a water-drawing machine which brings down the well ever new empty container and brings them up full of water.[1] Abhinava ends his definition of *bīja* putting an equation mark between the fruit and the *bīja*. He says that the *bīja* (seed) is fruit because it is inseparable from the means which will turn it into the fruit.[2] As an example of the *bīja* Abhinava gives that verse of the *Śakuntalā* in which the hermits announce in their blessing the fruit which Duṣyanta desires, i.e., to become the father of a son destined to be an emperor. On the whole Abhinava well elucidates the utterance of NŚ. Yet we feel that he does not stress enough an analogy to a plant which seems to be implied by NŚ. It is because of this that his final equation of the *bīja* with fruit gives an impression of a breathtaking speed in assembling the logical links permitting such an equation. From this point of view introduction of the *araghaṭṭanyāya* concept seems to be altogether off the mark. In order to assess better Abhinava's opinion let us recall to mind the original definition of *bīja*: "That which scattered (or sown) in a small measure, expands

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, III. p. 13 "*yad vastu, sāgarikā antaḥpuranivās* (*en*) *asamaye gambhīraprayojanasaṁvedanābhāvāt svalpamātram akiṁcitkaraprāyaṁ śaṁkyate saṁvādenotsṛṣṭaṁ ;prakṣiptaṁ yathāyaśyaṁ phalāntāṁ, yato bahubhiḥ prakārāir visarpaty eva sarvathā prasarati, yat tat siddhis tat phalam api yadi nirudhya phalatvena pravartate prathamaprakṣepeṇāiva deśakālāucityāpekṣāis tad bījavan nyasya araghaṭṭaparivartananyāyena bahutaropāyaparamparopari kāryam eva yasya apekṣyaṁ tad bījam*/"

[2] *Ibid.* "*phalam api ca bhaviṣyadupāyāvinābhāvāt bījam ity ucyate*/"

itself in various ways and ends in fruition, is called the Germ (*bīja*)."[1] A seed expands into a plant. This analogy is beyond question. No seed develops into a theoretically thin sprout without branches and leaves which, after reaching certain height, yields a fruit. Each seed grows into the complex structure of a plant with branches, leaves, thorns and flowers. It is never reduced to that pure vital force which works within it and which urges it to grow, and to give fruit. The complex structure of a tree cannot exist without that vital force which makes it grow. On the other hand, a pure vital force can be extricated from a plant only theoretically in the form of a vector of its growth. Practically this vital force is inseparable from the plant. An action has the same features. Each action springs up from a seed in the form of an initial idea or event. It grows, it branches off into many implications and consequences. It covers itself with the leaves of hope, with the thorns of setbacks and with the flowers of friendship and love. All these elements in their turn, like leaves that feed the trunk, feed that basic urge of a forward thrust aimed at fruition of an action. A tree will not grow without leaves. An action will never bring a concrete fruit without becoming itself a concrete action built of concrete events. This is in our view the meaning of NŚ's analogy. The *bīja* in this interpretation depicts the structure of an entire action no more limited to the theoretical concept of the five *avasthās* merely picturing its progress but conceived as a pattern of all concrete and complex events. Thus *bīja* appears to be the most universal, and, therefore, the most important of the five *arthaprakṛtis*. As a matter of fact the remaining four of them are only the most important four aspects of the *bīja*. Such a point of view received the most forceful support from NŚ itself, which in its description of the *sandhis* relates all of them to the phases in the development of the *bīja*.[2]

The *bindu* according to Abhinavagupta is the knowledge of the joining substance. That knowledge possesses search for its nature and is present in the chief hero. It flows from his

[1] *NŚ. MMG*, XXI. 22, "*svalpamātraṁ samutsṛṣṭaṁ bahudhā yad visarpati/ phalāvasānaṁ yac cāiva bījam tat parikīrtitam//*

[2] We shall discuss the nature of this relationship later.

ingeniousness of obtaining a fruit and is employed when there is a break in the means by which a fruit is produced; a break caused by something which has to be done because of the requirements of *itivṛtta.* Discussing further the problem of the extent to which the *bindu* should be employed, Abhinavagupta following the authority of NŚ, says that it should be employed by a hero till the very attainment of his fruit. Finally, ending his remarks, Abhinava notes that in this way the *bindu* having a function of the principal, rational and searching device fosters the elements of a play having itself the nature of the most important of them. All this is so because the *bindu* like a drop of oil pervades all. The last sentence summarises the discussion of both the *bīja* and the *bindu.* Here Abhinava says that the *bīja* should be caused to originate from the *mukhasandhi* and subsequently the *bindu* should be caused to originate. This is their special feature, as well as this that both of them spread over the entire *itivṛtta.*[1]

The foremost and practically the only serious objection to this interpretation concerns the view that the *bindu* is a device left to the exclusive use of the chief hero. The injunctions of NŚ concerning the *itivṛtta* are meant for the poets. It is, therefore, much more natural to understand the *bindu* as an element of the structure of the plot, given to the disposal of a poet. For it seems only just to let a poet decide whether to counteract that break of the means which produce a fruit through a hero himself or through anyone else among the characters of a play. Another point of Abhinava's exposition which demands criticism is his comparison of the *bindu* to a drop of oil.[2] It is difficult to understand why should it be that drop of oil evenly

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, v. III. p. 13-4, "*prayujyate phalaṁ yāir upāyānuṣṭhānāiḥ teṣāṁ itivṛttavaśād avaśyakartavyatādibhir vicchede 'pi sati yad anusandhānātmakaṁ pradhānanāyakagataṁ sandhidravyajñanaṁ binduḥ. jñānavicāraṇaṁ phalalābhopāyatvād/ yāvad avicchedaḥ pratyanusandhānena* (*na*) *kṛtas tāvan na kincid api kāryaṁ nirvahati...../* (*biṅdoḥ sthitiḥ*) *yāvat svasya phalasya samyagāptis tāvat /...../ ity evam pradhānānusandhānacetanavyāpāraḥ kāraṇānugrāhi svayaṁ ca paramakāraṇasvabhāvas tāilabinduvat sarvavyāp akatvād api binduḥ / bījaṁ ca mukhasandher eva pravartyātmānam unmeṣayati bindus tadanantaram iti viśeṣo 'nayoḥ,dve api tu samastetivṛttavyāpake/*"

[2] The same criticism will concern ND and DR and all those who use the same comparison.

spread on the surface of water, since according to Abhinava's own view it appears only when there is a break in the means which produce a fruit. It may be mentioned here that Abhinava unnecessarily uses for each of the *arthaprakṛtis* a different image. In the case of *bīja* it was a water-drawing machine, now it is the drop of oil, and in case of the *patākā* it will be a banner. It would certainly be better to keep a uniform imagery in all these comparisons in order to avoid confusion which may lead to a belief that all these elements are not interrelated. The assertion of Abhinava that both the *bīja* and the *bindu* spread over the entire *itivṛtta* is meaningful. For it should be remembered that Abhinava has already criticised the view which took the *arthaprakṛtis* for the portions of a whole play. Here he seems to yield to this view at least in the interpretation of the two first *arthaprakṛtis*. Besides in his interpretation of the *bindu* Abhinava goes considerably further than in the case of the *bīja*. Discussing the *bīja* Abhinava added little that could not be sanctioned by the basic text. But his treatment of the *bindu* has been much more liberal. The original definition of the *bindu* does not sanction his view, i.e., that the bindu is *pradhānanāyakagata*. The verse in question runs as follows: "The cause which liquidates the disruption when it occurs with regard to the aims (or means of attainment) as far as the end of composition, is called a drop (*bindu*).[1]

Shastri explaining DR's statement '*binduḥ jale tāilabinduvat prasāritvāt*' writes that 'though the *bindu* is a technical term here, yet it is termed according to its literal sense also, for it spreads itself like a drop of oil upon the surface of water.'[2] As we already know, Abhinavagupta and, following his footsteps, ND repeat this comparison. By now we know well what to think about it. Still it may be useful to add that if we accept this to be the meaning of *bindu*, then there will hardly be any difference between *bīja* and *bindu*. For *bīja* too is said to expand itself, and it may become somewhat frustrating to look for a difference between expanding and spreading. Bhoja's explanation, as Dr. Raghavan points out, is better. Bhoja

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 23, "*prayojanānāṁ vicchede yad avicchedakāraṇam/ yāvat samāptir bandhasya sa binduḥ parikīrtitaḥ//*"

[2] Shastri, *DR*, p. 24.

compares *bindu* to the drop of water dripping continuously or the drops of ghee falling at intervals in the flames of a fire which they keep burning without break.[1] We readily subscribe to Bhoja's view and choose to elaborate upon his first comparison. His complete opinion on that matter can be put as follows: "the drop of water, i.e., dripping water is the cause of an uninterrupted (progression) of actions which are characterised by fluidity."[2] The aim of our elaboration of this comparison is to reconcile it with a tree-like image of *itivṛtta* which was suggested by the concept of *bīja*. To fulfil this need *bindu* has been conceived as an all-sustaining drop of water without which no plant can grow and which, having been assimilated by it, becomes a drop of juice circulating in the plant and allowing it to regenerate whenever it is broken or cut. It becomes then a drop of resin exuding upon incision and thereby healing it. Thus *bindu* appears to be a general tendency underlying *itivṛtta* which guarantees its desired fulfilment. In other words *bindu* is a continuous reassurement that whenever something endangers an attainment of the aim of *itivṛtta* it shall be successfully eliminated. *Bindu* therefore is not a technical device attached to the person of a hero but it is a structural device describing the nature (*prakṛti*) of the matter (*artha*) of *itivṛtta* and it is defined for the use of a poet.

It is rather difficult to extricate *bindu* from the body of a play for most often the same elements of a play may have features of more than one *arthaprakṛti*.[3] Yet sometimes when an 'incision' of an adverse event cuts deeply into the body of the *itivṛtta* and threatens the endeavours of a hero with complete failure, then *bindu* appears with striking clarity. May be the best example of such *bindu* in the whole range of Sanskrit drama is that scene of the *Śakuntalā* when enraged Durvāsa, in answer to Priyaṁvadā and Anasūyā, mitigates his, at first irrevocably destructive, curse. The drop of resin of hope covered the gaping wound inflicted on the cause of the hero by adverse fate. The *Mṛcchakaṭika* furnishes an equally excellent example. The

[1] Raghavan, *BSP*, p. 597.

[2] *Ibid*, "...... /*payobinduś cyotan payo' bhiṣyandalakṣaṇāyāḥ kriyāyā avicchedahetuḥ*......./"

[3] As below—the scene of Durvāsas is also a *prakarī*. The subsidiary plot of a shampooer is a *patākā*.

strangled heroine falls dead. An axe of an adverse fate damages beyond reconstruction the very root of Cārudatta's tree of action. But an infallible *bindu* as Vasantasenā's miraculous resurrection heals that almost fatal wound. The *bindu* so conceived lasts in the form of an optimistic tendency throughout the entire *itivṛtta* and it manifests itself in the drops of hope which appear here and there and which according to the definition of *bindu* will always liquidate the disruption inflicted upon the means of attainment of fruit.

The next two *arthaprakṛtis* hardly yield themselves to diverse interpretations. Both DR and Abhinavabhāratī[1] fairly strictly follow the original definition of NŚ which runs as follows : "If a subsidiary plot is designed for the sake of another one (i.e., for the sake of a principal plot), if it subserves the principal plot and if it is composed like it—it (a subsidiary plot) is known as the *patākā*. (But) if the result (of a subsidiary plot) is only and exclusively meant for the sake of another (i.e., for the sake of the principal plot, such a subsidiary plot), because of an absence of continuity (in it), is called the *prakarī*."[2]

Apparently from the comparison of the *patākā* and the *prakarī* Abhinava draws a fully justified conclusion that *patākā* achieves its own aim.[3] The *prakarī* to the contrary attends dutifully to the needs of the principal plot[4] and does not have its separate aim. Since the *patākā* has to be composed like the principal plot, i.e., it has to have its own *phala* and its own distinct action, yet it still remains subservient to the principal plot, therefore, the above conclusion of Abhinavagupta is perfectly legitimate.

As we have already said, Abhinavagupta considers the *bīja* and the *bindu* exceptional in so far as they spread over the entire

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, v.III. p. 15. Shastri, *DR*, p. 15, DR treats *patākā* and *prakarī* under *prāsaṅgika itivṛtta*.

[2] *NŚ. GOŚ*, XIX. 24-5.
"yad vṛttaṁ tu parārthaṁ syāt pradhānasyopakārakam/
pradhānavac ca kalpyeta sā patāketi kīrtitā//
phalam prakalpyate yasyāḥ parārthāyāiva kevalam/
anubandhavihīnatvāt prakarīti vinirdiśet//"

[3] *NŚ. GOS*, v.III. p. 15. *"yasya saṁbandhi vṛttaṁ saṁvidanusandhānaṁ parasya prayojanasaṁpattaye bhavad api svaprayojanaṁ saṁpādayati/"*

[4] *Ibid.* *"...parārtham eva kevalaṁ sarvam anutiṣṭhati sā prakarī/"*

itivṛtta. NŚ's description of *patākā* confirms this opinion. It says that *patākā* should not last beyond the *vimarśasandhi* although it can spread over the remaining four *sandhis*.[1] In contrasting the character of the *bīja* and the *bindu* with that of the *patākā* and the *prakarī* Abhinava remains faithful to his original interpretation of the *arthaprakṛtis* as the means to an end. Their importance may vary, nevertheless they remain the five different means, i.e., the five separate entities which may freely be compared. Such an attitude in our view is erroneous. For the *bīja* as we have already noted, is the *itivṛttā* itself expressed in terms of the *arthaprakṛtis*, and all the other *arthaprakṛtis* co-define it. Yet we can accept Abhinava's distinction in so far as we consider both the *patākā* and the *prakarī* as the elements which are somewhat external to the basic plot and in addition optional in their use. Viewing it from this angle, we can state after Abhinavagupta that the spread of the *patākā* in the *itivṛtta* is of limited nature. But let it be remembered in this connection that the *patākā* has to be considered a lasting element of the plot, though limited to the four *sandhis* only. Its exclusion from the last *sandhi* seems to be dictated by a desire not to obscure the attainment of the chief aim.

It was comparatively easy to come to a conclusion with regard to the nature of the *patākā*. The problem of the *prakarī* is somewhat more complicated. Neither NŚ nor Abhinavabhāratī say directly when it should begin and for how long should it last. In order to obtain an answer to these questions we have to analyse more carefully the definition of the *prakarī* as it is found in NŚ. Specially helpful in this connection will be the following two terms used in that definition. One is *anubandha-vihīnatva*, i.e., the lack of continuity or duration, and another one is the very name of this *arthaprakṛti*—the *prakarī*. In our view it is a nominal derivative of the feminine gender from the root *kṛ* with the prefix *pra* which means to scatter, to strew or to throw about. Thus it may mean 'the one scattered about.' That "about" in our concrete case will mean the *itivṛtta*. Dr. Raghavan relating Bhoja's view on that matter says that *prakarī* is explained as being similar to a *prakara* or the heap of flowers strewn on the bed for its beauty and fragrance. We

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 29

fully agree with Dr. Raghavan that the explanation of the metaphor involved in the name is not satisfactory.[1] Yet linguistically speaking, Bhoja was looking in the proper direction, although he was carried too far away by his fertile poetic imagination. Abhinava's opinion concerning *itivṛttavyāpakatva* of the *bīja* and *bindu* exclusively, holds good in this case too. For the *prakarī* cannot be said to spread through the *itivṛtta*, but as stated above it may be scattered at several places in it. Yet it is important to remember that theoretically speaking the *prakarī* can accompany the main plot during its entire duration. But then, of course, it will become many *prakarīs* and practical considerations will never allow so many *prakarīs* to be introduced as to contradict the statement of Abhinavagupta.

Returning to our image of the plant-like *itivṛtta* we shall try to accommodate in it both the *patākā* and the *prakarī*. The meaning of the term *prakarī* must have by now become fairly clear. But *patākā*—a banner, hardly fits either the *itivṛtta* understood literally, i.e., as an action or figuratively as a plant of action. This prompts us to look for some other meaning of this term which would fulfil better, at least one of these demands. In our view its meaning has to be in some way co-relative to the meaning of the word *prakarī*. The word *patākā* meaning an emblem or a banner is derived from the root *pat*.[2] This derivation remains true for the technical term of NŚ with a little amendation made possible by the fact that the root *pat* has many meanings. One of these meanings is to occur, to come to pass, to happen. Thus *patākā* of NŚ appears to be a nominal derivative of the feminine gender from the root *pat* and in our case it means 'one that has come to pass', being at the same time a perfect correlative to the term *prakarī* which as we remember means 'one that is scattered about'. Such an understanding of these terms receives strong support in the form of the technical difference between them which practically can be reduced to the *anubandhavihīnatva* of the *prakarī*, i.e., to the difference in the duration of both episodes. This is exactly the opinion of Dhanañjaya although his commentator upholds the old comparison of the *patākā* to a banner.[3]

[1] Rahghavan, *BSP*, p. 598.
[2] "*patyate jñāyate kasyacit bhedo'nayā*/" Uṇādi Sūtras, 4. 14.
[3] Shastri, *DR*, p. 15.

As we can see the names of the *patākā* and the *prakarī* are not related to the *itivṛtta* conceived as a plant but refer to the basic meaning of the *itivṛtta*, i.e., action. Applying this figurative imagery to the *arthaprakṛtis* under discussion we shall find a convenient analogy to *patākā* in the creeper[1] which envelops the trunk and thick branches of a tree but leaves free the most tender, fruit-yielding branches of it (*nirvahaṇasandhi*). The famous sub-plot of Sugrīva in the *Rāmāyaṇa* may serve as an example here. The *prakarī* or rather the *prakarīs* in their turn result from a particular surrounding of our tree of action which does not stand alone but usually grows in a dense jungle of tree-like actions of other men. The branches of these actions-trees criss-cross the branches of the main *itivṛtta*. Sometimes they obstruct the growth of the main tree of action and sometimes they support and shield it. The *Śakuntalā* provides good examples of the *prakarīs* conceived in this way. The tree of Duṣyanta's *itivṛtta* is surrounded by the *itivṛttas* of Durvāsas, Kaśyapa, Fisherman and last but not least Indra. These *itivṛttas* happen outside the drama but although Kālidāsa has, so to speak, focussed his camera on the tree of Duṣyanta's action, yet the branches of other actions-trees come into the picture. We see the vigorous and thorny branch of Durvāsas' action almost crushing the tender and most sensitive sprouts of Duṣyanta's action. Three remaining *itivṛttas* with their branches lend support to the main one. Some are low near the root, some support branches and some the heavy bunches of fruit. Thus both *patākā* and *prakarī* fit well into the general picture of the *itivṛtta* and as we can clearly see they further define the nature (*prakṛti*) of the matter (*artha*). For they reflect two aspects more of a complicated process which a pure action of the five *avasthās* becomes in the reality of life.

Kārya, the last *arthaprakṛti*, is a trifle confusing. The very source of this confusion can be traced to the brief enunciation

[1] This analogy finds support in the field of architecture. Dr. V.S. Pathak of Banaras Hindu University drew my attention to the Kaliñjar Nīlakaṇṭheśwara Temple Inscription which contains a following passage: "*gaṅgāpatrapatākā hāimavatī śālabhañjikā yasmin*"/ This according to Dr. Pathak is an element of a portal, i.e., a creeper-frieze framing the door. Unhappily Acharya's *Dictianary of Indian Architecture* is silent on this point. The said inscription was to be published in *Epigraphica Indica*, XXI.

of NŚ which defines *kārya*. The verse in question runs as follows: "*yad ādhikārikaṁ vastu samyak prājñāiḥ prayujyate/ tadartho yaḥ samārambhas tat kāryaṁ parikīrtitam//*"[1] The problem is further complicated by the existence of a variant reading which has *vṛttam* instead of *vastu*. That variant has been chosen by the editor of the Nirṇaya Sāgar Press edition of NŚ[2] and adopted by Ghosh in his translation of NŚ.[3] Still the difficulties do not end here. One more problem is posed by the very name of this *arthaprakṛti* which appears to be identical with a term earlier introduced in the same chapter and undoubtedly denoting action.[4]

To begin with let us familiarise ourselves with the views of Abhinavagupta. "The subject-matter (*vastu*), which is carried towards (*prayujyate*) the shape of fruit by the wise, i.e., the chief hero, a hero of an episode and a hero of an incident—the sentient beings, (which) is accomplished and while being accomplished is searched for—such means of attaining fruit *phalaprayojanaḥ*), giving fullness to the fruit of adopted earlier basic strategems called *bīja*, (as well as the) entire matter beginning with materials, acts and qualities expressed by the word "*ārambha*" meaning "is produced", (which is) of help to it is called *kārya*. For *kārya* means that a fruit is produced (*kāryate*) by the sentient beings......Therefore, an empire, a treasury, a fortress and other manifold operations (as well as) the category of means of conciliation etc.—all these come under the purview of *kārya*."[5]

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX. 26.
[2] *NŚ. KM*, XIX.27.
[3] *NŚ. MMG*, XXI.26.
[4] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX.14 "*sarvasyāiva hi kāryasya prārabdhasya phalārthibhiḥ/etās tv anukrameṇāiva pañcāvasthā bhavanti hi//*"
[5] *NŚ. GOS*, v. III. 15-6. "...*prājñāiḥ pradhānanāyakapatākānāyakaprakarīnayakāiḥ cetanarūpāiḥ yad vastu phalarūpaṁ prayujyate saṁpādyate saṁpādyatvena anusandhīyate tat phalaprayojano yaḥ saṁpūrṇatādāyī pūrvaparigṛhītasya pradhānasya bījākhyopāyasya phalam, ārabhata ity ārambhaśabdavācyo dravyakriyāguṇaprabhṛtiḥ sarvo'rthaḥ (yasya) sahakārī (tat) kāryam ity ucyate, cetanāiḥ kāryate phalam iti vyutpattyā/....../ tena janapadakośadurgādikavyāpāravaicitryaṁ sāmādyupāyavarga ity etat sarvaṁ kārye'ntar bhavati//*"

It seems that Abhinava's *ārabhate* we can safely amend into *ārabhyate*. This is warranted by his subsequent explanation of the word *kārya* and by the universal practice in similar cases of discussing *vyutpatti*.

As we can see Abhinavagupta brings the definition of *kārya* very close to what might have been the definition of the *itivṛtta*. Yet he is well justified in his approach. *Kārya* certainly expresses the *itivṛtta* in its totality and at this stage our only reservation concerning Abhinava's exposition is that what it says stressing the word "produced" (*kāryate*) it subsequently dilutes by bringing in all these vague notions of an empire, treasury, fortress, etc. We also feel that in his exposition of the word *ārambha* (*samārambha* of the NŚ) Abhinavagupta was not sufficiently explicit regarding the spirit of an enterprise, urge, energy and effort, which it—according to us—conveys. Apart of that his stress upon the fact that *kārya* "gives in fullness the fruit of adopted earlier basic strategems called *bīja* appears to be somewhat controversial. This pronouncement seems to limit *kārya* in the form of an intensified effort to bring about the fruition of the *bīja*, to the later part of a play. Although Abhinava does not make his position in this respect fully clear, for the means listed by him as belonging to *kārya* may as well appear at the beginning of a play, yet we are supported in our belief by his earlier enunciation according to which only *bīja* and *bindu* spread over the entire *itivṛtta*.[1] Thus *kārya* finally emerges as the last stage of action culminating in the attainment of fruit, and as such it may become in a way identical with the *phalāgama avasthā*.

Besides this general objection, there is one more instance at which Abhinava's interpretation invites criticism. Here we have in mind his rendering of the word *prājñāiḥ*. The entire context of the definition of *kārya* unmistakably shows that the first word belongs to the same category with words like *prayoktṛbhiḥ*,[2] *kavibhiḥ*,[3] *budohaḥ*,[4] *nāṭyakovidāiḥ*[5] and *jñāiḥ*,[6] which is also used in a compound with *prayoga*.[7] All these words appear in the same chapter and all of them either call poets and actors by name (*kavi*, *prayoktṛ*) or allude to them like in the case of

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, v. III, p. 14.
[2] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX.7.44.49.147.
[3] *op. cit*, 45.47.68.70.105 also *kavina* 45 and *kaviḥ* 140.
[4] *op. cit*, 2.87.131. also *budhāiḥ* 67.
[5] *op. cit*, 131.
[6] *op. cit*, 92.96.
[7] *op. cit*, 138.

the second verse of Chapter XIX,[1] where *budha* according to Abhinavagupta himself means a poet.[2] These words, repeated endlessly in NŚ indicate that the whole treatise in general, and the nineteenth adhyāya in particular, is meant for poets and actors.[3] Thus all words of this type, when ever their context allows it, should be referred to poets or actors. Consequently the word *prājñāiḥ* in our particular case cannot mean, as Abhinava wants, sentient beings, i.e., heroes, but means the wise or the poets. This is how Ghosh interprets it.[4]

Before proceeding further we shall consider shortly the opinions of DR and SD.[5] The main characteristic feature of their interpretation of *kārya* is its explicit identification with the *kārya* of the five *avasthās* (XIX.14).[6] Yet having in this

[1] *op. cit*, 2. "*itivṛttam dvidhā cāiva budhas tu parikalpayet*/"

[2] *op. cit*, v.III,p.2 "*budho vivecakaḥ kavir*..."

[3] *op. cit*, v.I,p.8 "*kaviprayoktror upadeśaparaṁ śāstram iti lakṣyate*/" and p.327. "*kavinaṭaśikṣārtham eva sarvam idaṁ prakaraṇam*/"

[4] *NŚ. MMG, XXI* 26. 'experts'.

[5] ND simplifies somewhat Abhinava's exposition and says that *kārya* is all this means which is of assistance to the chief means viz., *bīja* in bringing about the fruition. *HND*, p.80 (I.33.35).

[6] The case of DR is opened to discussion. It is so because the verse of DR defining *kārya* does not have to be interpreted in the way suggested by Dhanika. We have already once pointed out the inconsistency of calling *phala* a *kārya*. It is to Dhanika that we owe the concept that *kārya* is fruit, stemming from an assumption that the *trivarga* of Dhanañjaya must mean *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* If we do not consider Dhanika an undisputable authority on the basic text of DR, then we could disregard his opinion and offer our own translation of the verse in question (*kāryaṁ trivargas tac chuddham ekānekānubandhi ca*). "Action is threefold ; without an obstacle, with one and with many." The word *anubandha* does not seem to be used here in its technical connotation given to it in NŚ, where it denotes a juncture of *patākā* (*NŚ. MMG*, XXI. 28) because DR uses in that case another term, i.e. *anusandhi* (Haas, *DR*, 3.31). It is true that DR has also the word *anubandha* mentioned in the context of *patākā* (*op. cit*, 1.21) but it seems to mean 'continuity' there. Besides, the verses which follow the definition of *kārya* seems to confirm our interpretation. The first of them speaks about *bīja* as the cause (*hetu*) of Action. The second gives in the form of *bindu* a remedy in case an Action has obstacles to overcome. (Haas' translation of that verse is wrong and it is rightly criticised by S.N. Shastri, *LPSD*, p.84n.3). The major shortcoming of Dhanika's interpretation is the problem of *śuddhakārya*. If we accept his view that *trivarga* means *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* then *śuddhakārya* seems to be that which is devoid of all the three. This is of

way extended the duration of *kārya* over the whole *itivṛtta* neither of them abandons the idea of a *phala* being included in this concept of *karyā*. Thus *kārya* becomes equated with the *itivṛtta* or at least becomes the most important, basic element of it. This is corroborated by the fact that Dhanañjaya discusses *kārya* before *bīja* and *bindu*, which he obviously treats as elements of *karyā*. Although Viśvanātha puts *kārya* at the end of the five *arthaprakṛtis*, yet he unmistakably indicates its special importance clearly identifying it with the *kārya* of the five *avasthās*. Viśvanātha like Dhanañjaya discusses first *arthaprakṛtis* and then *avasthās*. The opinion of both these authorities is correct in as much as it does not limit *kārya* to any particular stage of the *itivṛtta* but allows it to spread over the whole of it. If our reinterpretation of the formula of DR is accepted (see the note 1 p. 179) then it will be only SD which will commit an error of including the idea of fruit into the definition of *kārya*.[1]

Dr. Ghosh's translation of our definition runs as follows: "The effort made for the purpose of the Principal Plot introduced, in a play, by the experts, is called the Denouement (*kārya*)."[2] This rendering invites criticism twice. Firstly when the preference is given by Ghosh to the variant reading *vṛtta* over the reading *vastu*. Secondly when he takes denouement as an equivalent of *kārya*. It is difficult to say whether the scrutiny of the manuscripts would support Ghosh in his preference of the word *vṛtta*. We are inclined to believe that since the editors of the Baroda edition of NŚ had the largest number of manuscripts at their disposal,[3] their preference should normally be binding, unless there exist any special reasons for choosing otherwise. Dr. Ghosh can undoubtedly point out such a reason. We are well familiar with the term *ādhikārika vṛtta* from the

course absurd. Summarising his discussion of the *arthaprakṛtis*, Dhanañjaya lists all of them and right after it gives the NŚ's definition of *kārya* (XIX.44) as consisting of the five *avasthās*. Thus we can suppose that Dhanañjaya's interpretation is based, on the identification of *kārya* of the fourteenth verse of NŚ with the *arthaprakṛti* of the same name. In this way *kārya* of DR will not include the idea of fruit. Haas, *DR*, pp. 8 ff. Shastri, *DR*, pp. 22 ff.

[1] Ballantyne, *MC*, p. 193 (VI. 69-70).

[2] *NŚ. MMG*, XXI. 26.

[3] *NŚ. GOS*, v.I. preface.

earlier passages of the same chapter.[1] Nevertheless, this reading does not seem to stand up to critical examination. For if the effort which is called *kārya* is said to be made for the purpose of the principal plot, then we are given to understand that it does not form a part of the principal plot, but stands outside of it. Does it become part of any of the subsidiary plots? This seems to be an undue restriction imposed on *kārya*. Besides we should remember that the subsidiary plots are optional. What will happen, therefore, if there is no subsidiary plot in the *itivṛtta*? The answer to this query is simple. We cannot speak about an effort being made for the sake of the principal plot because each plot is built of efforts made for the sake of gaining the object of a given plot. In this light the other alternative of an effort being made for the sake of the principal object (*vastu*) seems to be much more natural and much less confusing.

Dr. Ghosh translates *kārya* as denouement following in this respect Haas. Haas himself must have been misled either by the French origin of this word or by the text of DR, or probably by both together.[2] Denouement means a catastrophe, the unravelling of the plot or complications and a final solution in a play, novel etc. As such it does not concern an object (*phala*) of a play but the last stage of action in a play. It would, therefore, be much more correct to use this word for the translation of the term *phalāgama* or *nirvahaṇa*. Dr. Ghosh's translation will, therefore, be right only in case he will limit *kārya* to the later part of the plot. Yet this interpretation can by no stretch of imagination be read into NŚ's definition.[3]

Our own interpretation of the passage in question does not basically differ from that of Dr. Ghosh, although of course, we do not share his preference for the word *vṛtta*. A following prose rendering of the definition of *kārya* expresses in our view its true meaning. "*Yaḥ samārambhaḥ samyagprājñaprayuktādhikārikavastvarthaḥ syāt, saḥ samārambhaḥ kāryam astīti yāvat.*" An enterprise intended for a principal object properly presented by

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, XIX 4.

[2] Haas, *DR*.1.24. see also p. 129 n.5.

[3] The enunciations of Dhanañjaya are opened to two interpretations. If we take verse 1.24. as unrelated to verse 1.28. then *kārya* will mean a fruit only ; otherwise it will stand for the entire action. Consequently in neither case *kārya* will correspond to denouement.

the wise, is known as *karya* (action). Such a definition of *kārya* poses an important question concerning the relationship of *kārya*—the *arthaprakṛti* with *kārya*—an action. Let us recall in this connection our conclusion reached at the end of the discussion of the *avasthā* scheme. 'The *avasthās* are in fact an expression of the progress of an action and as such they mark out five elements resulting from a vertical division of a horizontal vector of action running from the point at which an action begins towards its completion.[1] The stress here is put on the five stages of action. Yet, although separate entities, they are interlinked into one chain of continuity which has been hinted at as a horizontal vector of action. Each action, besides being a succession of the five separate stages is at the same time a continuous process which owes its continuity to the spirit of an enterprise underlying an entire action. An action in its continuity cannot be expressed in the terms of the five *avasthās* which stress the distinction and separateness of the five links in a chain of action. Its aspects of continuity are the five *arthaprakṛtis*. *Kārya* embarked upon for the sake of the concrete principal object of a play loses its non-particular character of the chain of five stages of action and becomes a particularised basic element of continuity called enterprise or undertaking.

This interpretation broadens the conception of *kārya* into a general tendency underlying or pervading each *itivṛtta*. This tendency causes *bīja* to develop into a full-fledged plant of action and to yield a fruit. In this form *kārya* can be conveniently compared with *bindu*. For as *bindu* represents a factor of unity in the *itivṛtta*, so *kārya* represents a factor of continuous growth in it. *Bindu* was compared to a drop of vital juice circulating the plant-like body of the *itivṛtta*. *Kārya* may be compared to the turgor in each cell of a plant—that internal pressure which makes a plant expand. Such *kārya* remains in harmony with all other *arthaprakṛtis*. It embodies another aspect of action taking place in the concrete surroundings of real life. It is never a single act of an effort which feeds the whole action with necessary thrust. This effort which in the abstract language of the *avasthās* is called *yatna* and placed as the second stage of action needs to be kept through the whole remaining part of

[1] See page 114.

a play—nay, it is also present at the first stage of it. It only culminates in the second stage when, so to speak, the physical beginning of an action takes place. A plant at the beginning grows very fast. The first push of a cart needs the highest measure of energy but if it is to be kept going that energy, although in smaller measure, has to be continuously applied. This is that spirit of an enterprise without which there is no action.

The above analysis permits us to consider the five *avasthās* as resulting from a vertical division of the vector of action. The *arthaprakṛtis* in their turn are an outcome of a horizontal division of it aiming at a determination of, so to speak, the breadth of that vector of action, the length of which is determined by the five *avasthās*. In this light Dhananjaya's theory of coambulation of the five *avasthās* with the five *arthaprakṛtis* respectively into five *sandhis* proves altogether unacceptable.[1] Abhinavagupta[2], Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra[3], and Viśvanātha[4] offer in concert with NŚ the only proper derivation of the five *sandhis*. Abhinavagupta says that the five parts of the subject-matter (*artha*) of a play are conceived in accordance with the division of the five *avasthās* and that each *sandhi* is as much of the subject-matter (*artha*) as is used during each *avasthā*.[5] Abhinava's view as usual is followed by the authors of ND. Similar also is the opinion of SD which says that "in accordance with the five stages of action respectively, there become as many divisions in the business or plot called the five Junctures. The Juncture—in its opinion—is the connection with an intervening object of the several portions of the business, which all are connected with, or tend to, one principal object."[6] Applying to this aspect of the *itivṛtta* the imagery intended by NŚ[7] we can say that the five *kāryāvasthās* are the five vertebrae and the five *arthaprakṛtis* constitute flesh. Together they make a

[1] Haas, *DR*, 1.34.

[2] *NŚ*. *GOS*, v. III, p. 22-3.

[3] *HND*, p. 94 (1.37.43.).

[4] Ballantyne, *MC*, p. 195 (VI.73-5).

[5] *NŚ*, *Ibid*. "...*rūpakārthasya pañcāṁśā avasthābhedena kalpyante*/...... *yā prārambhāvasthā prathamā vyākhyātā tadupayogī yāvān artharāśiḥ sa mukhasandhiḥ*/....../*evam anyeṣu sandhiṣu vācyam*/.

[6] Ballantyne. *MC*, p. 195.

[7] *NŚ*. *GOS*, XIX,1. "*itivṛttaṁ tu nāṭyasya śarīraṁ parikīrtitam*/"

body. The division of the five *avasthās* projected into the body built of the *arthaprakṛtis* results in the new concept of the five *sandhis*. The *sandhis* do not have an independent existence. They are only a projection of the scheme of pure action unto the whole multiple event which in the sphere of existence enwraps it. It is like an imaginary bamboo-plant five sections tall. The parallel lines drawn through these sections and reaching the outermost branches and leaves will outline five portions of the whole plant. These five portions will be comparable to the five *sandhis* of the *itivṛtta*. The body of a plot is an amalgam of the five *arthaprakṛtis*, the first of which—*bīja*, is the principal one. The whole plot is conceived as a plant or a creature developing from a seed,—from a *bīja*. All other *arthaprakṛtis* give simply a more detailed characteristic of the plot. It is not surprising, therefore, that the definitions of the five *sandhis* are nothing more and nothing less than descriptions of *bīja* at the five stages of action. These definitions translated by Dr. Ghosh run as follows: "That part of a play, in which the creation of the Germ (*bīja*) as the source of many objects and sentiments takes place, is called in consideration of its body the Opening (*mukha*, lit. face). Uncovering of the Germ placed in the Opening, after it has sometimes been perceptible and sometimes lost, is called the Progression (*pratimukha*). The sprouting of the Germ, its attainment or non-attainment and search for it, is called the Development (*garbha*). One's pause (*vimarśa*, lit. deliberation) over the Germ that has sprouted in the Development (*garbha*) on account of some temptation, anger or distress, is called the Juncture of that name (*i.e.* Pause). Bringing together the objects, of the Junctures, such as the Opening (*mukha*) etc. along with the Germ when they have attained fruition[1] is called the Conclusion (*nirvahaṇa*)."[2]

The above definitions including these of the *kāryāvasthās* and *arthaprakṛtis* reflect the regularities of each action. Each

[1] Abhinavagupta accepts another version, i.e., '*nānābhāvottarāṇām*' (followed by many *bhāvas*). This is a much better reading since it is correlative to '*nānārasa*' of the *mukhasandhi* and besides it is supported by a following verse of the first chapter of NŚ : "*nānābhāvopasampannaṁ nānāvasthāntarātmakam...nāṭyam etan maya kṛtam*/" (112) ; *NŚ. GOS*, v.III, p. 29.

[2]*NŚ. MMG*, XXI, 38-42.

scheme of course, idealises the object or objects which it represents. The theoreticians of *Nāṭya* were well aware of it and in the form of the eight *rūpakas* and numerous *uparūpakas* they accommodated most of the variants of action which only partly answer the demands of the outlined scheme. Practically speaking only *nāṭaka* and *prakaraṇa* are expected to embody a full-fledged action. All other types of plays may have lesser amount of *sandhis* but never less than two, *i.e.*, the *mukha* and the *nirvahaṇa*,[1] which seem to be absolutely indispensable in the process of 'acting'. Here we approach a problem of an extraordinary importance for our interpretation of *Nāṭya*. This is a problem of the deepest significance of each and every action. The mechanism of action has been described above. It remains now to find out what is the ultimate purpose of each action and how our scheme of action can help us to spotlight that purpose.

The most obvious conclusion in this respect is that the sense of an action lies in the achievement of fruit or, in other words, it lies in the fulfilment of the desire to acquire a particular fruit. We have already stated while discussing the sacrifice,[2] that the existence of desire implies duality or multiplicity which when overcome signifies the fulfilment of desire. It could have already been noticed that the definition of the first *sandhi* puts stress on the variety or multiplicity of the elements (*nānāo*), among which, of course, a hero and the object of his desire have to be included. That multiplicity comes to an end in the *nirvahaṇasandhi* where the *nānāo* of the *mukhasandhi* becomes *samānayana* i.e., brought together, integrated, joined or united. Since according to NŚ at least these two *sandhis* have to be present in the simplest type of play, they seem to be, therefore, the basic elements of the body of action and as such they prove beyond doubt that each action is a process of uniting the separated or integrating the multiple into one.[3]

[1] *NŚ GOS*, XIX, 47.

[2] See page 100 ff.

[3] It may not be out of place to note here that the very word *samāpta* or *samāpti* denoting end conveys a similar idea. The prefix *sam* stands for conjunction, union or completeness. The verb *āp* means to reach, to obtain, to meet, to take posssesion of etc. This term may be conveniently contrasted with the word *anta*, which denotes limit, death and destruction. This word never signifies a completion of action ; to express it the first term is employed.

In the foregoing pages we attempted to show that the theory of the *itivṛtta* has been laid down following an analytical enquiry into the nature of action. As a result of that enquiry there has been established a set of principles which characterise each and every action. That set of principles, therefore, can be rightly considered as depicting a universal aspect of action which is epitomised in each concrete performance of *Nāṭya.* Thus we touch upon the very core of our interpretation of *Nāṭya.* For, as it has been shown in the preceding chapter, this universal aspect of action is set out by the sacrifice itself which can rightly claim to be the primordial action, and therefore, a pattern for all subsequent happening in the Universe.

This aspect of the sacrifice has been already discussed on these pages. It will, therefore, suffice to compare the conclusions reached in both cases in order to find out whether *Nāṭya* really is an integral part of the reality which owes its form to the central concept of the sacrifice.

Conceived as an archetypal action, the sacrifice had set a following pattern for the course of all future actions; desire, effort and continuation of it, disruption and final completion. The analysis of action conducted in NŚ has yielded similar results. The basic element of the *mukhasandhi* is *āutsukya*, i.e., desire or eagerness to enter upon a particular action aimed at the achievement of a particular fruit. The second stage as viewed by NŚ does not require any comments—it is called *yatna*, i.e., an effort. The third one is the possibility of success which appears as the result of the continuation of the effort applied at the former stage. The fourth stage, called the restriction of an attainment (*niyatāpti*), corresponds to that stage of the sacrifice at which the attacks of the Asura-Rākṣasas endanger its completion. The last stage signifies in both cases the achievement of a fruit for the sake of which either the sacrifice or a sacrifice-like action has been embarked upon. This similarity of the course of both the sacrifice and action as embodied in *Nāṭya* naturally entails identity of their deepest significance. Both *Yajña* and *Nāṭya* bring an end to the multiplicity. *Yajña* does it on the metaphysical level through the reconstruction of Prajāpati's body. *Nāṭya* epitomises it, generalising on the stage the experience of that same process reflected in the mirror of human existence in the form of numberless human actions.

Bringing on the stage the fulfillment of a particular desire *Nāṭya* projects it through the prism of the aesthetic experience which amplifies it to an intensity of awareness of that basic metaphysical unity which causes the fulfilment of all desires and which is the only destiny of all actions.[1]

The problem of the absence of tragedy on the ancient Indian stage as envisaged by the works on dramaturgy is directly connected with the above outlined concept of *Nāṭya*. The explanations of this problem which are usually offered can almost without exception be reduced to the general statement that a tragic end is incompatible with the Hindu view of life. True as it is, this opinion requires some elucidation. The best so far has been offered by Dr. Dasgupta. "A drama as a work of art was regarded as a whole, as a cycle complete in itself. A drama ending with disastrous consequences would be a mutilated piece from the world of our experience—it would merely mean that the cycle has not been completed, or that it is only a partial view and not the whole......Thus the five critical situations—*sandhis*—constitute a unity, an epitome of our life as a whole. Life has its crises, its difficulties and disappointments, but we have always to be hopeful regarding the final fulfilment. The drama is thus the reflection of life as a whole from the Indian point of view and contains its own philosophy."[2] By now we know how true this statement is and where to look for the sources of this philosophy of drama. We know further that the fullest form of the view of life which *Nāṭya* as a whole reflects is expressed in the concept of *Yajña*. Since *Yajña* must reach a positive conclusion, it cannot therefore be overrun by the adverse forces of the Asuras, for then the disintegrated body of the Lord of Creatures will not be reconstructed and the whole order of the Universe will be perilously disturbed. *Nāṭya* is supposed to reflect this nature of the world to such an extent that it is itself called a sacrifice[3] so that it cannot

[1] This statement will be elaborated upon in the subsequent chapter.

[2] Dasgupta-De, *HSL*, p. LXXXI-LXXXII.

[3] *NŚ. GOS*, v.108 see p. 212. It is interesting to note in this connection that Abhinavagupta also considers *Nāṭya* a sacrifice. *op. cit*, v.II,p. 383 (*nāṭyavedamahāsattra*).

disregard this pattern and consequently be an untrue representation of the Three Worlds.[1]

In this light Bhavabhūti hardly deserves the epithet of a fool so lavishly bestowed on him by Shekhar, who criticises the composition of the *Uttararāmacarita*.[2] It is true that his epoch and to certain extent he himself may be blamed for choosing a comparatively easy way of giving expression to this view of life. Especially so, when one of his illustrious predecessors in the field of drama who had as difficult a problem as Bhavabhūti himself, could tackle it without trying to smooth out the complexity of the original conflict which he adopted for his play. The *Ūrubhaṅga* ascribed to Bhāsa is a perfect example that adherence to the basic philosophical concepts of *Nāṭya* did not in earlier stages cripple poets in their treatment of the realities of life. If the *Ūrubhaṅga* is a complete composition[3] it proves that for Bhāsa, *Nāṭya* was truly reflecting reality and was in no way its distortion. The changes of the plot and of the characteristic of the dramatis personae do not tend to smooth the work of a dramatist as it is in case of the *Śakuntalā*. To the contrary, the author of the *Ūrubhaṅga* further complicates his task by creating a deeply human Duryodhana who in no way resembles the standard evil Rākṣasas of the later dramas. Yet in spite of such a sympathetic treatment of Duryodhana his death at the end of the play is not tragic.[4] The death of Duryodhana does not have features of irrevocability and finality. He simply leaves this world for the better one. He is

[1] This interpretation does not render invalid Keith's explanation. He writes : "The fact that Sanskrit drama insists on happy ending is unquestionably most effectively explained if it be brought into connexion with the fact of the origin of drama in a passion play whose end was happiness through death not grief." (*SD*, p. 38). That happiness according to Keith is due to the victory of good over bad ; victory of Kṛṣṇa over Kaṁsa or spring over winter, from which motives that passion play originates. This explanation of the origin of ancient Indian theatre may well be true provided it is viewed in a broader context of the *dāivāsuram* conflict which we accept following Dr. Raghavan's opinion, as the most probable source of the Sanskrit theatre. see p. 61, n2.

[2] Shekhar, *SDOD*, p. 169.

[3] This is a subject of controversy. See Dasgupta-De, *HSL*. p. 717.

[4] Keith is right when he says that this end is not tragic. Yet it is not happy either. *SD*, p. 38.

well satisfied with his life which he evaluates. But that evaluation neither ends in helpless wailing nor in repentance. Says Duryodhana: "... . pride is the very body of kings and for pride alone I took to war."[1] The whole story of this play has the air of an objective account of events made from the point of view of the vanquished Kāuravas. Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas are censored but there is not a trace of the tendency to judge life in black and white terms as in the later dramas. Never was Rāvaṇa depicted in a way similar to Duryodhana. The manner in which the conflict of the Pāṇḍavas and Kāuravas is handled in the *Ūrubhaṅga* recalls to memory the *dāivāsuram* battles. There are, of course, victors and defeated in them. But the gods engaged in the conflict hardly betray any moral superiority over their adversaries. In the *Ūbruhaṅga* the Kāuravas are shown as an opposing force and not as the wretched enemies of both blameless gods and Pāṇḍavas. They had to be defeated, for in the *dāivāsuram* conflicts gods win and the Asuras lose. The defeat and death of the Kāuravas are in harmony with the rhythm of the whole Universe. A *dāivāsuram* battle determined by the order of creation has been fought. The gods won and the Asuras lost. Now they are at rest and the universal harmony is temporarily restored. This seems to be the true meaning of this so called tragedy which probably represents the oldest kind of dramatic performance composed still in the very spirit of the *dāivāsuram* conflict.

Another problem connected with this interpretation of the *itivṛtta* is the meaningful association of Indra and Sarasvatī with a hero and a heroine respectively.[2] This problem can be explained convincingly only with reference to the *dāivāsuram* conflict and its association with *Nāṭya*.

Indra is the uncontestable hero of the *dāivāsuram* conflict. Nothing, therefore, prevents us from believing that Indra was also a chief hero of the first performance which as we remember was a representation of the victory of the gods over the Asuras. Thus the association of Indra and *nāyaka* in each of subsequent

[1] *Ūrubhaṅga*, ed., and transl. by C.R. Devadhar, Poona, 1940. I.62-3 ; "*mānaśarīrā rājānaḥ mānārtham evamayā nigraho gṛhītaḥ*/.

[2] *NŚ. GOS*, I, 97. "*nāyakaṁ rakṣati indrastu nāyikāṁ ca sarasvatī*/"

performances, which as we have already shown, is in a way always a representation of some or other manifestation of the Universal conflict between the gods and the Asuras, does not need further comment for the time being. It is Sarasvatī who in this particular association seems to be somewhat a mystery. Yet the moment we consider her presence in *Nāṭya* in the light of her Brāhmaṇic association with Indra, the mystery will become transparent.

If our conclusion concerning the antiquity of the kernel of the first *adhyāya* of NŚ is accepted then there can be little doubt left as to the identity of the Sarasvatī of NŚ with the Brāhmaṇic goddess of the same name. The association of our Sarasvatī with Indra makes the possibility of her being directly identical with the river Sarasvatī remote. Since it is difficult to detect any meaningful relationship between Indra and this river goddess. This fact makes the idea of the existence of any Ṛgvedic source of this association also very improbable since as Macdonell puts it "there is nothing to show distinctly that Sarasvatī is ever anything more in the Ṛgveda than a river goddess and even then her only association with Indra comes through *vāc*."[1] Post-Brāhmaṇic association of Indra and Sarasvatī is also negligible and overshadowed by the unusual relationship of that goddess with her father Brahmā.[2] Thus the goddess Sarasvatī of the Brāhmaṇas, usually identified with *Vāc*,[3] appears to be identical with the goddess Sarasvatī of NŚ.

ŚB has the following passages: "Now the gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance: the gods came in for Mind and the Asuras for Speech. Thereby the gods came in for the sacrifice and the Asuras for speech; the gods for yonder (heaven) and the Asuras for this (earth). The gods said to *Yajña* (m. the sacrifice), 'That *Vāk* (f. speech) is a woman; beckon her and she will certainly call thee to her...Say to her, 'Come hither to me where I stand' and report to us her having come. She went up to where he was standing...He reported to them her having come, saying, 'She has indeed come'. The

[1] Macdonell, *VM*, p. 87.

[2] Hopkins, *EM*.

[3] *ŚB*, 4.5.8 10; 5.2.2.13-4; 5.3.4.25; 5.3.5.8; 7.5.1.31; 11.2.4.9; 11.2.6.3; 13.1.8.5; 14.2.1.15. Keith, *RVBr*, pp. XLV; 153; 264; 371; 405; 417; 426.

gods then cut her off from the Asuras; and having gained possession of her and enveloped her completely in fire, they offered her up as a holocaust, it being an offering of the gods. And in that they offered her with an *anuṣṭubh* verse, thereby they made her their own; and the Asuras being deprived of Speech were undone crying, '*He lavah, he lavah*'."[1] "They, Ādityas, brought *Vāc* (Speech) to them, Aṅgiras, for their sacrificial fee. They accepted her not saying, We shall be loser if we accept her'...Now Vāc was angry with them, 'In what respect, forsooth, is that one, Sūrya, better than I,—wherefore is it, that they should have accepted him and not me?' So saying she went away from them. Having become a lioness she went on seizing upon (everything) between those two contending parties, the gods and the Asuras. The gods called her to them, and so did the Asuras...Being willing to go over to the gods, she said, 'What would be mine, if I were to come over to you?'—'The offering will reach thee even before (it reaches) Agni.' She then said to the gods, 'Whatsoever blessing you will invoke through me, all that shall be accomplished unto you.' So she went over to the gods."[2] Probably on the strength of these and similar other passages Keith concluded that Speech forms a ground of contest between the gods and the Asuras but the gods finally win her.[3] Thus many *dāivāsuram* wars are fought for the possession of Speech. The question now arises what has made Speech so important that the gods deemed it worthwhile to fight the Asuras for her sake.

ŚB quotes the following mantra of the Vājasaneyi (V.14) and Ṛgveda (V.81.1) Saṁhitās: "They harness the mind and they harness the thought". ŚB offers the following gloss to this passage: "With the mind and with speech they truly perform the sacrifice." When he says, 'They harness the mind', he harnesses the mind when he says, 'and they harness the thoughts', (*dhī*), he harnesses speech; for it is thereby that people seek to make their living in accordance with their respective intelligence (*dhī*), either by reciting (the Veda), or by readiness of speech, or by songs,—with those two thus harnessed

1 *ŚB*, 3.2.1.18-23.
2 *ŚB*, 3.5.1.18-22.
3 Keith, *RPVU*, p. 456.

they perform the sacrifice."[1] Still elsewhere ŚB will say: "That same fire, then, they have kindled (thinking), 'In it, when kindled we will sacrifice to the gods'. In it, indeed, he makes these first two oblations 'to Mind and Speech (or Voice); for Mind and Speech when yoked together convey the sacrifice to the gods. Now what is performed (with formulas pronounced) in a low voice, by that the mind conveys the sacrifice to the gods; and what is performed (with formulas) distinctly uttered by speech, by that the speech conveys the sacrifice to the gods. And thus takes place here a twofold performance whereby he gratifies these two thinking, 'gratified and pleased these two shall convey the sacrifice to the gods."[2] But who finally are these two and what is their connection with our problem? As an answer to this query we shall once more quote a passage of ŚB. "Indra, assuredly is the mind, and Sarasvatī speech......"[3] Thus the sacrifice cannot be accomplished without Indra and Sarasvatī. Because as Mind and Speech they are mutually interdependent, for with Mind one sets Speech in motion, with Speech set in motion by Mind he provides the oblation for the gods."[4] The communion between Indra (Mind) and Sarasvatī (Speech) is so close that the *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* actually identified Indra with Speech.[5]

The meaning of the association of Indra and Sarasvatī with the hero and heroine of *Nāṭya* becomes now abundantly clear. Each performance is a *dāivāsuram* conflict in its course and sacrifice in its meaning. In each performance, therefore, the union of a *nāyaka* with a *nāyikā* is as substantial as the union of Indra with Vāc-Sarasvatī which, brought about through the victory over the demons in the *dāivāsuram* struggle, is an integral part of each sacrifice.[6]

[1] *ŚB*, 3.5.3.11.
[2] *ŚB*, 1.4.4.1-2.
[3] *ŚB*, 13.9.1.13.
[4] Keith, *RVBr*, p. 138.
[5] *op. cit*, p. 354.
[6] The intimate relationship of Indra and Vāc-Sarasvatī seems to allow us to take her as being identical with Indrāṇī. Both Sarasvatī and Indrāṇi are identified with Vāc (Macdonell, *BD*, p. 51, ffII.72ff). Both are associated with the Maruts (Macdonell, *VM*, p. 78). Besides Indrāṇī seems to have had rather meagre independent existence and her name appears to be a simple epithet of the wi'e of Indra (*Ibid.*) If we admit such a possibility

The world is *Yajña*. *Yajña* makes the world. It sets the pattern for all whatever happens in it. *Yajña* rules the world. *Nāṭya* represents such a world. It has, indeed, been given a perfect shape to fulfil this task, for it restates in the language of the technique of art the most substantial truths enshrined in the sacrifice. Such *Nāṭya* is an epitome of the entire cycle of existence—never tragic, because there is no place for tragedy in the universal *Yajña* of existence which is conducted through its course to a fulfilment when Mind and Speech or Indra and Sarasvatī are yoked together for its sake. *Nāṭya* was created in the likeness of the sacrifice, its heroes and heroines—in the likeness of Indra and Sarasvatī. What it has to convey to men is the truth, the entire and exact truth, about the nature of the world. But how does it happen for all those who cannot or will not follow the tortuous path of intellectual speculation? Let us try to answer this question.

in spite of lack of any explicit identification of these two, then a Ṛgvedic hymn about Indra, Indrāṇī and Vṛṣākapi (*RV*, 10.72, p.153ff. v.VI) can acquire some meaning for *Nāṭya*. Consequently it may not be altogether unjustified to suppose that there is some kind of relationship between Vṛṣākapi and Vidūṣaka. Both are heroe's or Indra's beloved friends. Both incur the anger of heroe's partner, Indrāṇī, heroine. Finally both are compared to monkey. This would give a new strength to the hypothesis made almost half a century ago by Gawroński (*PDI*, p. 30-32) that Vṛṣākapi is a prototype of Vidūṣaka.

10

THE ESSENCE (RASA)

The foregoing discussion can be summarised in the following way: *Nāṭya* faithfully reflects both the course and the ultimate destination of all happenings in the Universe. Since *Yajña* is the nature of this happening, therefore, *Nāṭya* termed NB the nature of the world itself,[1] has to present all the characteristic features of the sacrifice. *Nāṭya* fulfils this requirement, epitomising the interminable universal process in which the multiplicity characterising creation eventually disappears. As we have repeatedly stated, this universal process is identical with the sacrifice which is conceived as a reconstruction or replenishment of the primeval entity who became many for the sake of creation.[2] This process in the context of an individual means the fulfilment of his desires, for it is through desire that the multiplicity affects an individual. Consequently the fulfilment of desire which is identical with momentary merger of multiplicity allows man to experience the bliss of the unevolved Absolute. The Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas, which according to us form the proper background for the earliest theory of *Nāṭya*, are an overwhelming testimony of the striving of man for the fulfilment of his desires. This tendency is embodied in the very *Yajña* itself which is rightly said to exhaust desire through the enjoyment of desires.[3] To repeat, *Yajña* is an operation of universal metaphysical significance, aiming

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, I.119.

[2] As the Māitrī Upanṣiad says: "Verily that one became threefold. He developed forth eightfold, elevenfold, twelvefold, into an infinite number of parts. Because of having developed forth. He is a created being (*bhūta*), has entered into and moves among created beings."

[3] Keith, *AA*, p. 199.

at the fulfilment of all desires through the reconstruction of the body of the Lord of Creatures. Advancing further in time we can see that this point of view still to a certain extent lingers in the Upaniṣads and is indirectly acknowledged by their Advāitic interpretation. In order to hint at the highest bliss of the Absolute the *Bṛhadāraṇyka Upaniṣad* says, "As a man when in the embrace of a beloved wife, knows nothing within or without, so this person when in the embrace of the intelligent soul knows nothing within or without."[1] Thus the fulfilment of one of the most powerful desires of man is comparable to the highest bliss of the Absolute. Yet we can infer that this is not an empty comparison, since the *Tāittirīya Upaniṣad* considers the fulfilment of all earthly desires (conceived as the happiness of a young and powerful emperor) 'the unit of human joy; the endless multiplication of which results finally in the Brahmānanda.[2] Śaṅkara puts it even more explicitly when he comments on this passage saying that "even worldly bliss is a particle of the bliss that is Brahman."[3] Similarly another commentator, Upaniṣad-brahmā-yogin stresses that "there is no worldly bliss apart from Brahmānanda, for it contains all particles of bliss."[4] Of course, in the Vedantin's case a stress is put on the negative idea of a particle as the most negligible fragment of the highest bliss. Yet this attitude willy-nilly supports our contention that Brahmānanda-like joy, rewarding the fulfilment of an earthly desire, has never been contested even by those who considered it negligible beyond description.

All that we have said about *Nāṭya* unmistakably defines it as a glorification of action which aims at the fulfilment of desire. Such a concept of *Nāṭya* owes its existence to the great optimism of the Vedic and Brāhmaṇic ages, which is so well

[1] Hume, *TPU*, p. 82, 1.4.6.

[2] Gambhīra, *EU*, v. 1, p. 365. Dasgupta underlines that all desires belong to the same category of *kāma* and sex-desires also stand on the plane as any other desire. (*HIP*, v. I, p. 57).

[3] Gambhīra, *EU*, v. I, p. 366. for "Brahman becomes transmuted into impermanent worldly bliss."

[4] *Daśopaniṣad*, ed. C.K. Raja, Adyar Library, 1935, p. 368. "*na hi laukikānando 'pi brahmānandātirikto' sti| brahmānande kṣudrānandānām antarbhāvāt|*"

expressed by the *Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa* when it states that immortality for man is to live a full life and to be happy.[1] The same optimism which treats desire as the wholly legitimate aspiration of men reverberates in the stanzas of the *Gītā* when Śrī Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna saying: "In beings am I the desire which is not contrary to law, O Lord of Bharatas."[2]

The Theory of *Nāṭya* presented in the foregoing pages is inseparably wedded to this view of life and this attitude towards desire. An achievement of fruit or a fulfilment of desire is the pivot of each and every performance. As a result of his action the hero of a play achieves earthly happineess which even a Vedāntin would agree is a particle of the Supreme Bhahmānanda.

We have already shown in Chapter VIII of this study that technically speaking *Nāṭya* is in perfect harmony with sacrifice. Concluding our remarks concerning this problem, we wrote that what *Yajña* stands for, *Nāṭya* in its turn epitomises on the stage. Through an enactment of an episode resulting in the fulfilment of desire, *Nāṭya* (since it takes recourse to the aesthetic medium) forcefully intensifies our awareness of the basic metaphysical unity, which rewards fulfilment of any desire.

Before we try to explain in detail this assumption we shall first have to find possible reasons why NŚ does not elaborate this point, leaving it almost entirely to the care of later theoreticians. The simplest and the most plausible answer to this question seems to be that such a complex theory had not yet been fully evolved when NŚ was written. Yet this may not be the only reason. It should not, therefore, prevent us from admitting that NŚ may contain a similar theory in its pristine form, or what is more probable, may contain a number of pronouncements which will indicate the then approach towards the problem of aesthetic perception viewed from the spectator's side of the footlights. NŚ being a compendium for the performance-makers deals extensively with the art of evoking an aesthetic response. It does not say anything about these reactions of the spectator which do not directly affect a perfor-

[1] Lévi, *DS*, p. 94.

[2] Radhakrishnan, *BG*, VII. 11. "*dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi bharatarṣabha*/"

mance,[1] but which, nevertheless, seem to be the philosophical *raison d'etre* of the aesthetic experience. NŚ does not offer any theory similar to those propounded by Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta, for instance, because it addresses poets and actors. We shall not, therefore, try to prove that NŚ developed any theory comparable to these offered by its commentators. Our effort will be solely directed towards finding what might have been the course of that type of speculation when still unaffected by later philosophical theories. Technically speaking we shall try to find the implications of the actors' theory of *rasa* for the audience, calling for help all these stray remarks in NŚ which may throw some light on this problem.

The interdependence of *rasa* and *itivṛtta* has so far attracted very little attention.[2] A comparative review of the *sandhyaṅgas* and *vibhāvas* and *anubhāvas* yields very interesting and meaningful results.[3] It becomes absolutely clear after conducting such

[1] See *NŚ. MMG*, XXVII.

[2] Although as such this interdependence is self-evident and its existence was in general terms acknowledged repeatedly, yet the mutations of the aesthetic experience in harmony with the development of the *itivṛtta* seemed to be allowed to pass largely unnoted. Only Pandey deals with the problem (*IAe*, p. 174) see p. 223 ff.

[3] For instance *sādana* one of the *sandhyaṅgas* has a following definition : "Putting in insulting words for some purpose is called Humiliation." (*NŚ. MMG*, XXI. 95, the numbers below will refer to the same source). Exactly such a situation is said to be a *vibhāva* of the *amarṣa-vyabhicāribhāva* which has a following definition : "Indignation is caused to persons abused or insulted by those having a superior learning, wealth or power. It is to be represented on the stage by consequents such as shaking the head, perspiration, thinking and reflecting with downcast face, determination, looking for ways and allies and means, and the like." (VII. 77) Similarly the *vrīḍā-vyabhicāribhāva* will arise from the same situation. For it is defined as follows: "Shame has improper action as its basis. It is caused by Determinants such as humiliation/sic/and repentance on account of transgressing words of superiors or disregarding them, nonfulfilment of vows and the like. ." (VII. 57). Another striking example of the same interconnection is furnished by a comparison of the *sandhyaṅga* of *ānanda* and the *vyabhicāribhāva* of *harṣa*. The *sandhyaṅga* in question is defined as attaining objects of one's desire (XXI. 100). The respective *vyabhicāribhāva* is said to be caused by Determinants such as attainment of the desired object/sic/, union with a desired, trusted, and beloved person, mental satisfaction, favour of gods, preceptor, king and master, receiving good food, clothing and money and enjoying them and the

a comparison, that the *sandhyaṅgas* are nothing more and nothing less than *vibhāvas* from which transitory and permanent *bhāvas* arise followed by *rasas*. Yet if this is correct, then a question arises why should they at one time be called *sandhyaṅgas*; and at another time *vibhāvas*? What happens is this; *sandhyaṅgas* stand for the elements of a literary composition which in the case of theatre is designed to be enacted but which may also remain off the stage for ever. In the second case (i.e., as long as play is not enacted) *sandhyaṅgas* will remain what they are, viz., purely literary situations. But if a play becomes an actual performance all its situations (*sandhyaṅgas*) fundamentally change their character. They are no more merely literary products but dramatised they become concrete events, which actually happen on the stage. Yet though their character changes, their—so to speak—original design does not. A literary sketch of a situation acquires on the stage flesh (*vibhāva*) and life or movement through acting (*anubhāva*). This process can be conveniently exemplified by the process of film-making. The difference between a *sandhyaṅga* and a *vibhāva* is similar to the one which exists between the written scenario of a given situation and a still picture of the same situation. Motion in this picture becomes *anubhāva* or rather a series of *anubhāvas* already directly responsible for the rise of *vyabhicāribhāvas*, *sthāibhāvas* and *rasas*. Thus *vibhāvas* and *anubhāvas* denote a *sandhyaṅga* in the process of its execution on the stage. According to this analysis one aspect of a *sandhyaṅga* remains, so to say, static and since it determines the pattern of that

like..." (VII. 60). Another interesting *sandhyaṅga* is that of *udvega*, defined as fear arising from the king, enemy, or a robber (XXI. 88). This *sandhyaṅga* is the *vibhāva* of the *vyabhicāribhāva* called *śaṅkā*, which is said to be caused by determinants such as theft, giving offence to the king and the like (VII. 32). Further *kheda-sandhyaṅga*, defined as fatigue from mental effort (XXI. 93), is said to be the *vibhāva* of the *glānivyabhicāribhāva* which proceeds from such determinants like mental worry for instance. (VII. 30). *Niṣedha-sandhyaṅga* defined as obstruction of one's desired object (XXI. 94) is the *vibhāva* of the *capalatā-vyabhicāribhāva*, which is caused by such Determinants as impatience, jealousy, opposition etc. (VII. 59). *Nirodha*, defined as appearance of some calamity (XXI. 79) is the *vibhāva* of the *viṣāda-vyabhicāribhāva*, which is caused by Determinants such as accidential calamity for instance (VII. 68).

situation it is called a determinant (*vibhāva*).[1] Another aspect of the same situation (*sandhyaṅga*) may be called—if we may use a neologism—viatic since it stands for motion (acting) and is, as it were, a via-media between a *sandhyaṅga* already transformed on the stage into a *vibhāva* and its onlooker. In other words that element, particular to a performed situation (*vibhāva*), makes it felt by a spectator and this is why it has been called *anubhāva* (consequent).[2] An actual enactment of a *sandhyaṅga* transforms it into an aggregate of *vibhāva* and *anubhāvas*. In such a manner there is established the most direct and intimate contact between the *itivṛtta* and *rasa*, not limited anymore to a general and somewhat misty relationship between cause and effect, but a very concrete dependence active at each and every moment of a performance. This is why NŚ recapitulating its enumeration of *sandhyaṅgas* stresses that "it is with a view to introducing sentiments (*rasa*) and states (*bhāva*) that an expert playwright should insert all those limbs into the appropriate Junctures of his work."[3] It is for the same reason that "the *itivṛtta* is called the basis of the Sentiments."[4] All this shows that the correlation between *itivṛtta* and *rasa* is one of the most important problems which a playwright has to face when composing a play.

The question now arises whether there are in NŚ any suggestions at all concerning this correlation or whether a poet is absolutely free to handle it according to his will. NŚ assures us that there is no matter in Nāṭya which is void of rasa.[5] Besides, NŚ at least on a few occasions, indicates a particular configuration of *rasas* in their relationship to *itivṛtta*. First of all this problem is tackled on the occasion of discussing the *sandhis*. The *mukhasandhi* is supposed to give rise to many *rasas*.[6] The *nirvahaṇasandhi* in turn is given the function of

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, VII. 4. "*bahavo'rthā vibhāvyante vāgaṅgābhinayāśrayāḥ| anena yasmāt tena ayaṁ vibhāva iti saṁjñitaḥ|*".

[2] *op. cit.*, 5. "*vāgaṅgābhinayeneha yatas tv artho'nubhāvyate| śākhāngopāṅgasaṁyuktas tv anubhāvas tataḥ smṛtaḥ||*".

[3] *NŚ MMG*, XXI. 104. "*yathāsandhi tu kartavyāny etāny aṅgāni nāṭake| kavibhiḥ kāvyakuśalāi rasabhāvam apekṣya tu||*.

[4] *NŚ MMG*, XX. 50, *GOS*, XVIII. 47 n.8. variant reading '*rasāśrayopeta*'.

[5] *NŚ. GOS*, v.I, p. 272. "*na hi rasād ṛte kaścid arthaḥ pravartate*".

[6] See p. 131.

bringing together all these *bhāvas* which have given rise to many *rasas* of the *mukhasandhi.*[1] Elsewhere NŚ states that in practice a play giving rise to only one *rasa* does not exist.[2] The most interesting statement NŚ makes when discussing the *nāṭaka* type of play. "At the conclusion of all the plays which contain various States and Sentiments, experts should always introduce the Marvellous Sentiment."[3] This statement corroborates the evidence furnished by the definitions of the *sandhis* mentioned above and elaborates it stressing the necessity of introducing the *adbhuta rasa* at the end of each play. From these recommendatoins of NŚ it appears that *rasas* are supposed to follow the basic pattern of a performance. A performance, as we have repeatedly said, being an epitome of existence reflects its basic tendency—a tendency to integrate the multiple—a movement from diversity to unity. The same process reflected by the theory of *rasa* is not a *tour de force*, but it is a completely natural and fully justified consequence of such an approach towards *Nāṭya.* After all, *rasa* in spite of its being the aim of *Nāṭya,* technically speaking is only an 'emotional shadow' accompanying a performance.[4] Consequently, whenever many *arthas* of a play which generate many *rasas* are brought together, the 'shadows' of these *arthas* in the form of *rasas* become one at the end of a play as the *Adbhuta rasa.* Under these circumstances, it is impossible to agree with any proposition in the field of aesthetic experience which would not take into account an entire play as a source of the fullest form of the aesthetic experience. From above it follows that only a spectator who consciously participates in what happens on the stage may be capable of experiencing the plenum of that relish which may be termed an awareness of the final destination of all the endeavours of existence, i.e., perfect merger with the Absolute. This is the logical conclusion of the theory of *Nāṭya* outlined in these pages. This very conclusion, at least in four instances, is almost directly supported by NŚ

[1] See p. 135.

[2] *NŚ. KM*, XX, 64. "*na hi ekarasajaṁ kāvyaṁ kiṁcid asti prayogataḥ*" (only to be found in one manuscript).

[3] *NŚ. MMG*, XX. 46. "*sarveṣāṁ kāvyānāṁ nānārasabhāvayuktiyuktānām/ nirvahaṇe kartavyo nityaṁ hi raso'dbhutas tajjñāiḥ//*".

[4] Similar to a roadside tree which is planted only for the sake of its shadow.

itself. To begin with, according to that treatise *Nāṭya* has been created by Brahmā as a replica of the world of which it is said to be the nature itself.[1] The universe and existence have their beginning in Brahmā and find their end in Him. If, therefore, *Nāṭya* is really supposed to be up to that definition, which also terms it a representation of the true condition of the Three Worlds[2] then *Nāṭya's* performance has also to convey to the spectator this awareness of the ultimate destiny of creation. Another interesting piece of evidence is to be found in the *nāndī* verses alluded to earlier. Only the second half of the third, and the second half of the fourth verse will interest us here. "*Prekṣākartur mahān dharmo bhavatu brahmabhāvitaḥ*/" and "*ijyayā cānayā nityaṁ prīyantāṁ devatā iti*/."[3] *Prekṣākartṛ* of the first quotation denotes a patron, i.e., in broader sense the audience. *Bhāvita* in compounds means pervaded or inspired by, occupied or engrossed with, devoted to or intent upon. Thus a wish is expressed that the *dharma* of the patrons of the performance, *viz.*, audience be pervaded or engrossed with Brahma. It seems legitimate to suppose that the idea expressed in this wish remains in some relationship to a performance called in the second quotation a sacrifice which in the *Kāuṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* is said to bring an identity of the world and union with Brāhman to those who perform it.[4] Still another interesting argument supporting our contention is to be found in the last chapter of NŚ in the form of a verse which could be a *maṅgala-śloka* for the entire treatise. "*Ya idaṁ śṛṇuyān nityaṁ proktañ cedaṁ svayambhuvā prayogaṁ yac ca kurvīta prekṣate cāvadhānavān*// *yā gatir vedaviduṣāṁ yā gatir yajñakāriṇaḥ*/ *yā gatir dānaśīlānāṁ tāṁ gatiṁ prāpnuyān naraḥ*//."[5] The goal of the students of the Vedas or that of the performer of the sacrifice is promised to those who attentively hear and watch a performance of *Nāṭya*. The *Tāittirīya Upaniṣad* says: "*sa eko brahmānandaḥ śrotriyasya ca kāmahatasya*/".[6] About the reward for a performer of sacrifice we have repeatedly spoken. Thus *Nāṭya* is supposed

1 See page 81n.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *NŚ. GOS*, v.107-8. See also page 33.

4 See page 99.

5 *NŚ. MMG*, (text) XXXVI. 78-9.

6 Gambhīra, *EU*, p. 363, VIII. 4.

to be as good a tool to reach the absolute as the Vedas and the sacrifice. Yet another meaningful argument is the already touched upon problem of the *Adbhuta rasa*. This *rasa*, into which all other *rasas* are supposed to merge at the end of a play, has as its presiding deity Brahmā himself.[1] If all the time we keep in view the exceptional importance of this god in the mythological account of Chapter I of NŚ[2] then the fact that he is the deity of a *rasa* singled out as the most suitable to wind up a whole play from an emotional point of view, cannot be overstressed. It was probably with something similar in mind that Nārāyaṇa, the great grandfather of Viśvanātha, wrote: "In Flavour, even in every case, Wonder is felt as its essence. Since Wonder is its essence, it follows that Flavour, even in every case, is that sentiment or Flavour called the Marvellous.' Hence the learned Nārāyaṇa—adds Viśwanātha—has acknowledged only one Flavour, the Marvellous, and no other."[3] It is, of course, not necessary to go so far and to deny *rasatva* to all other *rasas*. Suffice it to say that *Adbhuta rasa* undoubtedly has been conceived in NŚ as somewhat different from other *rasas*. This is indicated through its association with Brahmā and through putting it at the end of the list of the eight *rasas* as well as through allotting to it a very particular place in each play. Nevertheless, it should not be too speedily identified with that impersonal, ultimate experience of *Brahmānanda*. For the *Adbhuta rasa* still belongs to the sphere of discursive experience which is evoked in the spectator through the skill of an actor and a poet. Otherwise NŚ would not have dealt with it.

It is thus far that we could proceed on the basis of NŚ alone. This theory lacks, of course, the refinement of the later concepts. Yet it stresses certain elements which these later theories overlook or underrate. In this light we shall try to review briefly the most important and accomplished contribution to the thoery of *rasa*, originated by Bhaṭṭanāyaka and elaborated by Abhinavagupta.[4] The central idea of their theory is the

[1] *NŚ. GOS*, VI. 45.

[2] See page 28 ff.

[3] Ballantyne, *MC*, p. 41. Dr. Raghavan discusses this problem exhaustively (*NR*, p. 171-5). It follows from his discussion that there were quite few followers of the theory giving priority to the *Adbhuta rasa*.

[4] Gnoli, *AEAA*. p. XXI. Pandey, *IAe*, p. 81.

formulation of the concept of generalisation (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*).[1] The core of it is the assumption that *Nāṭya* is capable of making a spectator "rise momentarily above time, space and casuality and, therefore, above the stream of his practical life."[2] Abhinavagupta offers an elaborate explanation how this comes about. The *pūrvaraṅga*, music, dance, *abhinayas*, styles and conventions etc. all serve the purpose of eliminating any possible influences of actual life. "The presence of these elements—says Abhinava—eliminates the perception of the following order;[3] this particular individual, in this particular place, at this particular moment feels pain, pleasure etc. This elimination takes place in so far as the theatrical spectacle implies the negation both of the real being of the actor and of the real being of the character he is playing. Indeed, on one side there is the negation of the real being of the actor and on the other the spectator's consciousness does not rest entirely on the being represented who. therefore, does not succeed in hiding completely the real being of the actor."[4] Consequently, what happens on the stage belongs neither to the time and space of Rāma, for instance, nor to the time and space of the actor who impersonates him. In this way men and their actions shown on the stage are freed from all particulars, *i.e.*, are totally deindividualised. The same elements of *Nāṭya* which served the purpose of stripping a performed event of all its particularity contribute to the elimination of all particularity proper to the consciousness of a spectator. In other words they make him mentally free from the casuality of his own concrete existence. An actor, who is termed "an assistant in identification through heart's consent"[5] causes a spectator to "identify himself with joy and sorrow etc. which arise from watching gesticulation and other *abhinayas*."[6] So much so that he, so to speak, "enters the

[1] Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 11.

[2] *op. cit*, p. XXI.

[3] Our addition.

[4] Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 80-1.

[5] *op. cit*, p. 106 *HABH*, p. 195. "*hṛdayasaṁvādatanmayībhavanasahakārin*" ;

[6] *NŚ. GOS*, v.I. p. 36. "*sūcyādyābhinayāvalokanodbhinnapramodaśokāditanmayībhāvaḥ*", Acharya Viśveśvar (*HABh*, p. 186) unnecessarily '*sūci*' into '*sūtradhara*'. '*Sūci* according to Monier-Williams' Dictionary means also gesticulation or dramatic action.

character represented and remains himself in no relationship to any particular time and place."[1] "During the spectacle—says Abhinavagupta—the spectator forgets about the *saṁsārika* existence and immerses himself in the Tasting of the vocal and instrumental music which accompanies the play being acted."[2] As a result "the spectator is no longer living either in the space and time of Rāma etc. nor in the space and time of actor as such."[3] This is the state of identification termed by Abhinavagupta as *tanmayībhāva*.[4] What happens next is described by Abhinava with the help of an example of the second verse from the first act of the *Śakuntalā*.[5] After having outlined as above the process of generalisation and identification with respect to the situation depicted in that verse he says: "As a result, what there appears is simply and solely Fear—Fear in itself, uncircumscribed by time, space etc. This perception of Fear is of different order from the ordinary perceptions ("I am afraid, he my enemy, my friend, anybody—is afraid."); for these are necessarily affected by the appearance of fresh mental movement (of shunning etc.), consisting of pleasure, pain etc., and just for this reason are full of obstacles (*vighna*). The sensation of the Fear above mentioned, on the contrary, is the matter of cognition by a perception devoid of obstacles (*nirvighna*), and may be said to enter directly (*niviś*) into our hearts, to dance before (*viparivṛt*) our eyes; this is the Terrible Rasa. In such Fear one's own Self is found to be in a state neither of complete occultation (*tiraskṛ*) nor of particular emergence (*ullikh*) and the same thing happens with the other Selves."[6] This form

[1] *HABh*, p. 186-7. "......*tadīyacaritamadhyapraviṣṭa-svātmarūpamatiḥ svātmadvāreṇa viśvaṁ tathā paśyan, pratyekaṁ sāmājiko deśakālaviśeṣaṇāparāmarśena,......*"/.

[2] Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 112.

[3] *op. cit*, p. 104.

[4] See notes 5 and 6 page 153. *HABh*, p. 502-3. "......*hṛdayasaṁvādakrameṇa tanmayībhāvāpanna*..." Pandey (*IAe*, p. 170) in this connection speaks about *tādātmya*.

[5] Gnoli is wrong when he says that it is the second *śloka*. Counting the *ślokas* of the *prastāvanā* it is the seventh *śloka*, "*grīvābhaṅgābhirāmaṁ muhur anupatati syandane baddhadṛṣṭiḥ paścārdhena praviṣṭaḥ śarapatanabhayād bhūyasā pūrvakāyam/darbhāir ardhāvalidhāiḥ śramavivṛtamukhabhraṁśibhiḥ kīrṇavartmā paśyodagraplutatvādviyati bahutaraṁ stokamurvyāṁ prayāti//.*"

[6] Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 67-8.

of consciousenss is, according to Abhinavagupta called *camatkāra.*[1] *Camatkāra* in its turn is in his eyes "an uninterrupted (*achinna*) state of immersion (*āveśa*) in an Enjoyment, characterised by the presence of sensation of inner fullness (*tṛpti*)."[2] "All *rasas*, adds Abhinava, are dominated by pleasure because of being the quintessence of *Ānanda* of the manifest and uninterrupted form of tasting one's own consciousness."[3] Such an experience "lasts exactly as long as the Tasting, *i.e.*, it does not lean on any time separate from it."[4] This theory has led Abhinavagupta so far as to admit that *rasa* is the quintessence of beatitude. Yet he hastens to point out the difference between the beatific experience of an aesthete and Yogic experience of the Absolute which Bhaṭṭanāyaka almost identified.[5] In aesthetic experience, conceived as different from that which rewards a yogin, "the fact of being immersed in complete abandonment within the adored object; the lack of evidence, due to the absence of active participation; and the presence of obstacles, are absent. The reasons for this abence are: (a) the absence of abandonment to one's own Self to the exclusion of everything else, (b) an active participation in one's own Self, and thus the absence of the character of otherness proper to cognition of the thoughts of others, and (c) immersion in the latent traces left by the mental states of Delight, etc., reawakened by the corresponding Determinants, etc., which are generalised."[6]

Abhinava's theory of *rasa* enriches us not only with the most valuable concepts of the *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* and *tanmayībhāva* but also makes our understanding of the concept of *rasa* much more precise. This theory places the experience of *rasa* above the level of ordinary experience but below that of the yogin's experience of Brahman.[7] As we shall try to show, these three

[1] *op. cit.* p. 71-2.

[2] *op. cit*, p. 74.

[3] *op. cit*, p. 87. Gnoli translates this passage as follows : "..... for the essence of light—closely dense light, consisting of the Tasting of one's own consciousness—is beatitude." This seems to be a rather obscure rendering of "....../*svasaṁviccarvaṇārūpasyāikaghanasya prakāśasyānandasāratvāt*". *HABh*, p. 478.

[4] Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 96-7.

[5] *op. cit*, p. 56 and n.1.

[6] *op. cit*, p. 101-2.

[7] *DH. L*, after verse 18 (p. 326).

aspects of Abhinava's theory fit well our interpretation of NŚ's theory of *rasa*. Our objections will concern only the identity of different *rasas* at the highest level of aesthetic experience and the meaning and importance of their particular arrangement in the *itivṛtta*. In this connection we shall also discuss the point raised by Pandey concerning the climactic character of the aesthetic experience.

According to Abhinavagupta all *rasas* are dominated by pleasure (*sukhapradhāna*) and, therefore, all *rasas* at the highest level of aesthetic experience become *camatkāra* which is "the continuous state of immersion in Enjoyment characterised by the presence of the sensation of inner fullness." It further follows from what Abhinava says that this state appears at the beginning of a play immediately after *prastāvanā* and lasts throughout till the end of it.[1] Here a question poses itself whether *camatkāra* is only one or whether it can be said to be many—as many as the *rasas*. Abhinavagupta, of course, chooses the first eventuality but "he admits that there is a stage in the process of aesthetic experience, in which the self experiences itself as affected by the *sthāyin*."[2] Although the point of view represented by Abhinavagupta is an unquestionable improvement on all these theories which do not see any particular difference between an experience of the Absolute and an aesthetic experience, yet it still views the relish of all *rasas* as a uniform experience (*camatkāra*) nearer to that of the Absolute than to that of a *lāukika* type. Even in the case of Abhinava's modified theory it is not easy to understand how a performance lasting for a few hours and generating many *rasas* maintains that 'rest of universal subject in itself'. Especially as it comes through "utter disregard of the basic mental state..... which sinks back into subconscious."[3] If this has already happened after the first verses of a play are recited then how do the

"*laukikāsvādād yogiviṣayāc cānya evāyaṁ rasāsvādaḥ*".

[1] Discussing the process of generating *rasa* Abhinava seems to believe that already at the very beginning of a play (*Śakuntalā*, 1.8.2) we have a full relish of *rasa* (Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 67.) The building of an aesthetic image spoken of by Pandey (*IAe*, p. 174) seems to be complete with the end of *prastāvanā*.

[2] *op. cit*, p. 141.

[3] *Ibid.*

remaining verses and events affect a spectator? If it happens through the subconscious how then can a spectator remember even the minutest details of *abhinaya*?[1] Thus to our comprehension Abhinava's error is not much different from that of Bhaṭṭanāyaka in spite of his assurance that the experience of *rasa* is not identical with that of the Absolute.

Dr. Raghavan draws our attention to a view that is very interesting in this connection, i.e., the view of Śāradātanaya.[2] This writer holds that *rasānubhāva* is similar to the Jīvātman's enjoyment of the world. Yatiraja Swami, the editor of the *Bhāvaprakāśa*, holds "that this view regarding the nature of *rasānubhāva*, is more appropriate than that of Bhaṭṭanāyaka, as the dramas are intended only to represent the daily life of human beings. The Jīvas enjoy several *rasas* in their everyday life. The same actions, enacted by clever actors by following the beautiful compositions of the poets, make the *Jīvas*, who possess similar impressions of their own deeds, identify themselves with the Heroes. Thus they enjoy the worldly pleasure after forgetting themselves through the same process to which they are subjected in actual life .. ...As the *Nāṭya* is the representation of the daily life the enjoyment of *Nāṭyarasa* also must be more appropriately compared (as (Śāradātanaya does for the first time) to *Saṁsarānanda* and not with Brahmānanda."[3] Yatiraja Swami rightly feels that such an approach gets support in the sayings of Kālidāsa and Dhanañjaya[4] and in the enunciations of NŚ itself. For, as we remember, its definition of *Nāṭya* says that it is the representation of the true state of the Three Worlds. This true state, in its turn, is more elaborately described in another verse of the same passage of NŚ which co-defines *Nāṭya* from-another angle. It says that *Nāṭya* is of the nature of the world with its happiness and despair. If these definitions are to be taken seriously, then that true state of the entire Three Worlds, with its characteristic

[1] Similar criticism has been levelled by Rājacūḍāmaṇidīkṣita against Śaṅkuka's theory of inference (Rakeśa, *PSR*, p. 47).

[2] Raghavan, *NR*, p. 157.

[3] *BP. GOS*, p. 39-40.

[4] Kālidāsa, *MA*, 1. "*trāiguṇyodbhavam atra lokcaritaṁ nānārasaṁ dṛśyate.*" *DR*, 1. 7. "*avasthānukṛtir nāṭyaṁ*" both quoted in *BP. GOS*, p. 39.

features of happiness and despair, has to reach in some way the very consciousness of a spectator. So that the postulate expressed in still another verse elaborating the same definition of *Nāṭya*, namely that *Nāṭya* should generate good instruction in the world,[1] would be fulfilled. It is difficult to visualise how *Nāṭya* can fulfil its teaching mission otherwise than by making that joy and sorrow of existence really felt by those who watch the performance. In such circumstances experiences of different *rasas* even at their highest pitch have to differ. If this was not so why then should NŚ attach so much importance to the enumeration and description of the eight different *rasas*. The fact that, nevertheless, we can in a way speak about enjoying sorrow or fear in the theatre seems to be sufficiently explained by the concept of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* and does not necessarily imply the superstructure of *camatkāra* understood as quintessence of joy. We hold, therefore, together with Rāmachandra and Guṇacandra[2] that the many *rasas*, the presence of which in a play NŚ makes obligatory, preserve their distinct identity even at the highest level of aesthetic experience. Yet because of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* the experience of either joy or sorrow is of a non-particular character and this is why we readily expose ourselves to such an experience, feeling at least satisfaction if not joy itself.[3]

It remains now to find out whether *Nāṭya* offers to a spectator anything more than an experience of these generalised emotions called *rasas*. As the reader can judge from the preceding sections of this chapter, our answer is in the affirmative. At the same time this brings us to the problem of the climactic character of aesthetic experience.

Neither Abhinavagupta nor any other theoretician seem to have paid much attention to this problem. It is only Pandey who deals with the subject in brief.[1] It appears from the general

[1] The problem raised by critics like Abhinava who hold that all *rasas* are pleasurable has been convincingly criticised by Rakeśagupta (*PSR*, p. 75ff). Dr. Raghavan also discusses this problem in *NR* (p. 155ff) and in *BSP* (p. 483-4).

[2] *HND*, p. 234.

[3] Here we differ from Śāradātanaya as well as Rakeśagupta who do not seem to see any particular difference between ordinary and theatrical emotions.

attitude of Abhinava that the experience of *rasa* is more or less the steady companion of a play during its entire duration. The process of building up this experience seems to be limited to the introductory music, the *pūrvaraṅga* and *prastāvanā*. The rest of the time, if the play is successful and spectators are 'possessive of heart', this experience flows smoothly at the highest level of *camatkāra*. Pandey's opinion is different. He submits that "aesthetic experience does not persist throughout the presentation, because the aesthetic image on which it depends slowly develops. Hence it is a climactic experience. It arises when the image reaches completion, when the basic emotion rises to the highest pitch."[2] Whatever be the source of Pandey's view it expresses almost exactly our approach. For as we have already shown the configuration of *rasas* in the plot postulates certain mutations of aesthetic experience along with the progress of the *itivṛtta*. The culmination of that process comes about in the *nirvahaṇasandhi* when the many *rasas* hitherto evoked by a play integrate into the last one of them—the *Adbhuta rasa* which is the *rasa* of Brahma himself. Although we do not feel that this *rasa* itself should be singled out, following Nārāyaṇa, as the highest form of aesthetic experience,[3] yet it is only after the *Adbhuta rasa* born of the achievement of a desired object[4] prepares the mind and heart of a spectator, that we can speak about an aesthetic experience as comparable or even identical with the experience of Brahmānanda.

We have by now collected and discussed all elements of what we venture to call our theory of aesthetic experience which we shall restate briefly below.

The decision of a prospective spectator to witness a theatrical performance implies his heart consent (*hṛdayasaṁvāda*)—the most necessary precondition permitting one to appreciate a work of

[1] Pandey, *IAe*, p. 174.

[2] *Ibid.* Discussing this problem Pandey quotes *DH.L.* But the quotation appears to be little relevant. It seems that both in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and in the *Locana* Abhinavagupta did not consider the progress of *itivṛtta* as a substantial element in generating the highest experience of *rasa* which may be brought about by reading a short poem or even a *muktaka*.

[3] for the reasons see page 152.

[4] *NŚ. GOS*, VI, p. 329. "*īpsitamanorathāvāpti*".

art. He enters a theatre-hall the very atmosphere of which tends to weaken his mental absorption with the problems of his everyday life. For as we remember, a theatre-hall is not only beautifully ornamented but is also invested with the divine defences against interruption (*vighna*).[1] The host of gods shields actors as well as spectators from all dangers which the art and its relish may incur including the encroachments of reality upon the consciousness of the spectator. Crossing the ante-chambers of the theatre-hall where Kṛtānta and Kāla are posted and passing between two sentries Nirṛti and Mṛtyu, playing the role of the doorkeepers, a spectator enters a new world leaving behind the one he belonged to. So prepared, the spectator's consciousness is now subjected to the cleansing influence of music.[2] When the heart of a spectator has thus become spotless as a mirror,[3] then he is confronted with the events of *pūrvaraṅga* and *prastāvanā*. Here the last requirement of a perfect *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* is fulfilled. For at this stage the reality of the hero is contrasted against that of the actor, thus removing the last vestiges of particularity which might have been still lingering in the consciousness of the spectator. By now "the spectator whose awareness of his own self is lost in the events represented endowed with *camatkāra*, continues by means of his own self to see everything in this light."[4] This supra-temporal and supra-spacial atmosphere of the witnessed events with which a spectator identifies himself conditions his reactions into equally non-particular emotional responses. Thus a spectator finds himself in a perfect state of generality. Under such circumstances the progressive unfolding of the *itivṛtta* leads a spectator through the whole cycle of existence epitomised in each play. By means of aesthetic perception he experiences happiness and despair of the world, uncircumscribed by any particular time or space. Now slowly the multiplicity of existence, which underlies the duality of joy and sorrow, comes to

[1] see p. 43ff.

[2] Gnoli, *AEAA*, p. 112.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *op. cit*, p. 113. Here our interpretation differs from that of Abhinava since we do not consider this stage of aesthetic experience as an ultimate one. We hold that at this stage aesthetic relish is still differentiated into many *rasas*.

an end. The obstacles and barriers which divide humanity from the objects of its desire fall to the ground and only now the true state of inner fullness (*tṛpti*) becomes emotionally experienced by a spectator. There is no more place in his heart for pity, mirth, love, fear, heroism, violence or disgust which are all inherent to multiplicity. Emotionally the spectator reaches a plenum of perfect satisfaction or marvellous harmony which is reflected in his heart as the *Adbhuta rasa*, the *rasa* of Brahmā. In such a way the spectator becomes aware of the ultimate destiny of all human endeavours which find their fulfilment in perfect rest—the unity and identity with Brahman. This may for the spectator become a prolonged awareness of the harmony of the universe and the purposefulness of human life or it may descend upon him at the highest pitch of the *Adbhuta rasa* like a lightening. For "the level of pure aesthetic experience is indeed that of the pure angelic understanding, proper to the Motionless Heaven, Brahmaloka..." where the vision of Brahman is compared to a 'sudden flash of lightening."[1]

[1] Coomaraswamy, *TNA*, p. 50.

Part IV

REACTION

11

THE ESSENCE OF PEACE (*ŚĀNTA-RASA*)

The original concept of *Nāṭya* as presented in the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* did not remain unaffected by subsequent changes in its cultural milieu. Certain new developments had already taken place before the final compilation of NŚ. They were promptly noticed and incorporated into the text. The change in the status of actors which necessitated a special justification in the form of the last chapters of NŚ was one of them. Besides, the growing cults of Śiva and Viṣṇu found their expression in the form of the mythological accounts of Chapter IV and Chapter XX respectively. Yet the most important change took the shape of a hidden erosion which was weakening what had been the foundation of this theory since its very inception.

The sacrificial *weltanschauung* which constitutes the backbone of the earliest theory of *Nāṭya* considers desire and its fulfilment as the central preoccupation of existence. In expectation of the joy of fulfilled desires the Absolute became many and embarked upon the eternal *Yajña* which fulfills all desires. This was the concept of life cherished by the robust Aryan conquerors of India. It permitted them to achieve the tremendous task of colonisation of the entire subcontinent. The new environment in which they found themselves began to exert its influence upon their thinking. This is not the proper place to discuss in detail the character and the historical background of this influence. Suffice to say that already the Upaniṣads betray new tendencies which later on brought a wholesome condemnation of any action motivated by desire. It might be of interest to compare in this connection the two following passages taken from the *Māṇḍūkya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads* respectively. 'For him whose desires have been fulfilled and who has realised himself all

his desires vanish here.[1] And 'He who has not desires, who had no desires, who has freed himself from all desires, is satisfied in his desires and in himself, his senses do not go out. He being Brahma attains Brahmahood. Thus the verse says, when all his desires that are in his heart are got rid of, the mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahma here.'[2] While the first of these quotations still reflects the positive Vedic and Brāhmaṇic attitude towards desire—the second one announces a powerful trend of Indian thinking aimed at the total elimination of all desire. The Upaniṣads formulated the course and destination of meditation which was growing in importance as a tool for realisation of the Ultimate. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: 'The discriminating man should merge the (organ of) speech into the mind; he should merge that (mind) into intelligent self; he should merge the intelligent self into the Great Soul, he should merge the Great Soul into the peaceful (*Śānta*) self.[3] Yet at the same time this text apparently reflects an older view point according to which peace (*Śānti*) is for those who sacrifice and engage in works.[4] A statement made still further on seems to mark an intermediary stage at which the assertion is made that eternal peace (*Śānti*) is gained through meditative technique which brings the realisation of the Supreme conceived as the only dispenser of the desired object.[5] Here the fulfilment of desire still constitutes a means of obtaining peace. The attitude towards desire is not, of course, the only aspect differentiating the Upaniṣads from the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas. Dr. Keith discusses extensively other differences.[6] Our particular concern with this

[1] Hume, *TPU*, p. 56.

[2] *BUP*, 4.4.1-7.

[3] Gambhira, *EU*, Kāṭha. 1.3.13.

[4] *op. cit*, 1.1.17 'one who getting connection with three, piles up the *Naciketa* fire thrice, and undertakes three kinds of work crosses over death. Getting knowledge of this omniscient one who is born of Brahma and realising Him he attains this peace (*śānti*) fully'.

[5] *op.cit*, 2.2.13. 'Eternal peace (*śānti*) is for those—and not for others—who are discriminating, and who realise in their hearts Him who—being the ephemeral, the consciousness among the conscious—alone dispenses the desired object to many.'

[6] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 441-2. 'The distinction corresponds we may fairly say, in the main to a change of time and still more to a change of view. The Upaniṣads hold in some degree at least of doctrine of transmigration, and

subject is limited to the question of the attitude towards action motivated by desire. We shall not therefore further consider the Upaniṣads here.

It was probably the Sāṁkhya-Yoga school within Hinduism,[1] and Jāina trends outside it that exerted influence on Upaniṣadic thinking. Yet the true revolution had still to come. This was fulfilled by the Buddha. For this particular attitude of desirelessness which the Upaniṣads anticipated received its fullast interpretation from him. Dr. Murti quotes the following verse which is attributed to Buddha himself, 'Desire, know I thy root; from imagination thou springest; No more shall I indulge in imagination; I will have no desire any more.'[2] The *Sutta-Nipāta* in the Book of Octads says:

> 'The man whose heart's desires are gratified is glad indeed to see success secured. But, if his heart's desires and aims be foiled, he smarts as if a dart had wounded him. Yet, should he shun desires as he would shun a snake's head underfoot, by vigilance he overcomes the world's seductive lures. Whoso with boundless appetite desires fields, lands, or gold, herds, horses, women, serfs, and kinsfolk,—him tumultous desires (weak though they seem) o'ercome at

though not in a developed condition the pessimism which follows it; these views are not those of Brāhmaṇas, which taken all in all, know not transmigration, have no conception of pessimism and, therefore, seek no release from the toils of life, for which in reality there is no ending. These are fundamental distinctions, and they give an essentially different aspect to the speculations of the Brāhmaṇas as compared with those of the Upaniṣads. A further distinction lies in the fact that the Brāhmaṇas are essentially connected with the doctrine of the sacrifice. The sacrifice clearly occupied the minds of the priests to the practical exclusion of all else, and their theories are in large measure devoted to the consideration of its relation to the Universe, to the gods and to men. In the Upaniṣads this is not the case; the sacrifice is still here and there the subject of speculation, but the speculation is no longer based on the view that sacrifice is all in all.

[1] Johnston (*ES*, p. 80) derives Sāṁkhya from the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. Keith (*SS*, p. 7) says that 'it is impossible to find in the Upaniṣads any real basis for Śaṁkhya system.' But later on he says that 'just like Vedānta of Śaṁkara or Vedānta of Badarāyana the Sāṁkhya system is a built on the Upaniṣads.' (*Ibid.*) Zimmer (*PI*, p. 281) believes that 'Sāṁkhya ideas do not belong to the original stock of Vedic and Brāhmaṇic tradition.'

[2] Murti, *CPB*, p. 223.

last; they crush their victim. Hereon Ills come surging in, like waves that flood some wrecked ship's crazy hold, Therefore by watchfulness discard desires; expel them, bale your ship; and cross the Flood to safety's haven on the Further Shore.'[1]

This is a most outspoken challenge of all that for which men hitherto stood. It found its most powerful expression in Buddha's outright condemnation of the sacrifice when asked 'why hosts of sages—nobly born, or brahmins—sacrificed on earth to gods?' Buddha says in answer to this question that 'they sacrificed because they cherished hopes that by sacrifice to gods they may win some earthly bliss. But in spite of their zeal in craving, lauding, praying and sacrificing which is to be repaid in sensory pleasures, these sacrificing folk who pine for future life—have not escaped birth and eld. For only that man whose thought has scanned the entire universe, who does not know waverings, who, good and without a smouldering vice, is free from tremors or desires—he is saved from birth and eld.'[2] Buddha struck at the very root of Vedic Hinduism leaving in its place only 'the atheistic soul denying philosophic teaching of a path to personal Final Deliverance consisting in an absolute extinction of life.'[3] Since 'subjectively minded, Buddhism is little interested in cosmological speculations and constructive explanation of the universe,[4] it had to denigrate the sacrifice which offers exactly this constructive explanation of the universe. 'The Buddha—says Dr. Keith—had no such faith as would render it possible to lay down a doctrine applicable to all aspects of life.'[5]

Thus *Nāṭya* was contested by early Buddhism not only as a simple manifestation of worldliness[6], but also in its very nature which in the form of *Yajña* appeared totally incompatible with everything for which the utterly austere teaching of the Buddha stood. It was little probable that in such circumstances Bud-

[1] Chalmers, *BT*, p. 185.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 244-7.
[3] Stcherbatsky quoted by Murti, *CPB*, p. 5.
[4] *op. cit*, p. 12.
[5] Keith, *BP*, p. 146.
[6] Keith, *SD*, p. 43.

dhism would in any way affect the theory of *Nāṭya*. Its consequently negative attitude precluded any form of influence save the one aiming at a total extermination of this art.[1] *Nāṭya* had to wait for the change of this attitude until the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism. For as V.A. Smith writes 'the rigorous doctrine of the earliest form of Buddhism was too chilly to retain hold upon the hearts of men unless when quickened and warmed by human emotions.'[2] According to Dr. Keith the Mahāyāna movement became effective in the first century AD.[3] Dr. Dasgupta in turn believes that 'the distinct Mahāyānic trends within Buddhism existed already in 100 BC. if not earlier.'[4] T. Stcherbatsky on the other hand suggests the Fifth Century of the history of Buddhism as the time of Mahāyāna's birth.[5] It is thus around the beginning of the Christian era that Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged as a new and potent force which exerted tremendous influence on the Indian culture as a whole. The seed of the Mahāyāna was already present in the fateful decision of the Buddha to share his enlightenment not only with one or two or even a dozen of *śiṣyas*, who might have found him somewhere in the forest, but to share it with all. In order to satisfy this urge he goes out to preach his truth to the world.[6] It was a very stern and severe truth. For 'salvation was imagined and cherished as a state of absolute quiescence (*nirodha—śānti—nirvāṇa*). Therefore life, ordinary life (*saṁsāra*), was considered as a condition of degradation and misery.'[7] Yet even this attitude already anticipates the later concept which puts an equation mark between *Saṁsāra* and *Nirvāṇa*. For the human life seemed to be always of '...supreme

[1] This supposition is supported by the well known negative attitude towards *prekṣās* and *samājas* of the Buddhist scripture and of such propagators of Buddhism like king Aśoka for instance.

[2] Smith, *OHI*, p. 153.

[3] Keith, *BP*, p. 218.

[4] Dasgupta, *HIP*, p. 125.

[5] Stcherbatsky, *BL*, p. 7.

[6] Schayer, *MDS*, p. 16. '...in ancient Buddhism...we encounter for the first time the form of a 'knowing man' who after many years of persistent seeking finds the Path of Liberation, and who does not keep his knowledge to himself, but goes out into the world giving this teaching to everyone without distinction... ..'

[7] Stcherbatsky, *BL*, p. 4.

value to the Buddhist as the only condition from which the highest good can be reached. . . '[1] In the all-out effort of the Mahāyānist to secure universal salvation *Saṁsāra* gained a much more positive character than it had for the early Buddhists. By now a theory was promulgated according to which 'the *Saṁsāra* and the *Nirvāṇa* are mere appearance; the truth is stainless, changeless, and quiescent from the very beginning and illumed.'[2] Still elsewhere Nāgārjuna says that 'there is not the slightest difference of *Saṁsāra* from *Nirvāṇa*....In between them not the slightest shade of difference is found.'[3] In this way *Saṁsāra*, although considered a mere appearance which should by all means be transcended, loses its predominantly negative character. It becomes now more evident that the negative aspect of *Saṁsāra* conceived as a veil obscuring the face of truth can be removed only through the positive aspect of the same *Saṁsāra* conceived as the path of liberation. The sense of responsibility for the salvation of every being and the missionary zeal of the Mahāyānists made them look for effective means of preaching. There was no reason any more why art in general and *Nāṭya* in particular should not be utilised for this purpose. The more so as the very definition of *Nāṭya* must have sounded attractive to a Buddhist ear. *Nāṭya*, as we remember, is termed a representation of the Three Worlds, the nature of the world with its happiness and despair and a representation of the Seven Islands. Besides, *Nāṭya* generates good instruction.[4] It is obvious that for a Buddhist with missionary temperament this sounded like a description of a perfect medium for propagation of the Buddhist view of the nature of the world conceived as a path of salvation. Thus *Nāṭya* gained the attention of the Buddhists who undertook the study of it, for which the *Lalitavistāra* promptly provided a sanction listing the knowledge of drama as included among Buddha's accomplishments.[5] Aśvaghoṣa was the first who followed this illustrious predecessor.[6]

[1] Coomaraswamy, *B* and *GB*, p. 171.

[2] Bhattacarya, *MV*, N. 16.

[3] Nāgārjuna, *MMK*, XXV. 19-20 quoted by Guenther, *PPA*, p. 295.

[4] *NŚ*. MMG, I, 106, 118, 121, 113.

[5] Keith, *SD*, p. 43.

[6] The *Lalitavistāra* was probably written during First and Second Century AD. (Dasgupta-De, *HSL*, p. 614). Our argument should not be

Aśvaghoṣa's interest in poetry and drama alone is enough to make his Hīnayānist orthodoxy highly suspicious. If we add to this coincidence in time with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the extremely interesting and usually reliable testimony of the Chinese tradition,[1] as well as the fact that 'despite their religious zeal, the literary works of Aśvaghoṣa could not have been approved wholeheartedly by learned monks for his freedom of views and leaning towards Brahminical learning,'[2] then it will be difficult not to agree with Lévi[3], and Suzuki[4], who hold that Aśvaghoṣa was a pioneer of Mahāyāna Buddhism.[5] It was not only in the sphere of religion in which Aśvaghoṣa could claim to be a pioneer. The same term will apply to him in the field of Buddhist *belles lettres*.[6] Though Aśvaghoṣa's literary works bear the distinct features of a well accomplished art, it does not seem probable that he had any Buddhistic antecedents in this domain. It is much more possible that his

taken in a strict sense of the chronological priority. Its validity would not have changed even if Aśvaghoṣa was earlier than the particular statement of the *Lalitavistāra*. The most important here is an effort to establish the highest authority for the activities like those of Aśvaghoṣa.

1 Suzuki, *ADAFM*, Introduction.

2 Dasgupta, *HIP*, p. 138. Dasgupta-De, *HSL*, 78.

3 Lévi, *MSA*, A. p. 13.

4 Suzuki, *ADFF*, M, p. 1.

5 La Vallée Poussin would not agree to this view (Law, *A*, p. 33). Also Dr. Keith does not seem to be convinced by those who ascribe the Mahāyānaśraddhotpādaśāstra to Aśvaghoṣa and thus connect him with Mahāyāna Buddhism. (Keith, *BP*, p. 228).

6 And not only *belles lettres*. Music also seems to have had in him a great exponent. We shall quote here *in extenso* the Chinese legend which becomes very probable indeed in the light of Aśvaghoṣa's other accomplishments. 'He then went to Pāṭaliputra for his propaganda-tour, where he composed an excellent tune called *Lai cha huo lo* (*rastavara?*), that he might by this means convert the people of the city. Its melody was classical, mournful, and melodious, inducing the audience to ponder on the misery, emptiness, and non-*ātmanness* of life. That is to say the music roused in the mind of the hearer the thought that all aggregates are visionary, and subject to transformation; that the triple world is a jail and a bondage with nothing enjoyable in it; that since royalty, nobility, and the exercise of supreme power; are all characterised with transitoriness, nothing can prevent their decline ; which will be as sure as the dispersion of clouds in the sky; that this corporeal existence is a sham, is as hollow as a plantain tree, is an enemy, a foe, one not to be intimately related with; and again that like a box in which a cobra is kept it

only forerunners were the Brahminical writers.[1] The surmise that Aśvaghoṣa was a real pioneer in the field of Sanskrit Buddhist poetry and drama is supported (apart from the fact of the lack of earlier works of this type) by a certain urgency with which he states at the end of the *Sāundarananda* that 'he has written this work for extinction of desire and not for enjoyment of pleasures' 'in the form of a *kāvya*', 'but making it contain teachings of salvation', that its readers (lit. listeners), who are by nature turned to other thoughts, may understand it (and take it to heart); 'what has been written elsewhere in the form of a religious text' is being repeated......' in the way of a *kāvya*, as a bitter medicine is mixed with honey 'when given to a patient to drink that it may be acceptable to him'... He would rather write directly about *mokṣa* as he says he has done already, but men are 'mad after things of enjoyment and averse to salvation'; 'he has therefore no help but 'to teach salvation (which involves abandonment of all enjoyment under the cloak of a (pleasant) *kāvya*).[2] Consequently it will not be surprising to take Aśvaghoṣa for a precursor of the Buddhist *kāvya* written in Sanskrit, who had to convince his Buddhist confréres about his sincerity as a partisan of the new faith on the one hand, and

should never be cherished by anybody, that therefore all Buddhas denounce persons clinging to a corporeal existence. Thus explaining in detail the doctrine of the non-*ātman* and the *śūnyatā*, Aśvaghoṣa had the melody played by the musicians, who however, not being able to grasp the significance of the piece failed to produce the intended tune and harmony. He then donned a white woolen dress, joined the band of musicians, beating the drum, ringing the bell, and tuning the lyre, and this done, the melody in full perfection gave a note at once mournful and soothing so as to arouse in the mind of the audience the idea of the misery, emptiness and non-*ātmanness* of all things. The five hundred royal princes in the city thus moved all at once were fully awakened, and abhorring the curse of the five evil passions abandoned their worldly life and took refuge in the Bodhi. The king of Pāṭaliputra was very much terrified by the event, thinking that if the people who listen to this music would abandon their homes, like the princes, his country would be depopulated and his royal business ruined. So he warned the people never to play this music hereafter. Suzuki, *ADAFM*, p. 35.

[1] K. Chattopadhyaya in the paper 'The Date of Kālidāsa' (*Allahabad University Studies*, vol. II, 1926) suggests pre-Aśvaghoṣan time even for Kālidāsa.

[2] Chattopadhyaya, *DK*, p. 82.

about the utility of his new medium of preaching on the other. In such circumstances Aśvaghoṣa's encounter with *Nāṭya* becomes very meaningful. Especially since 'the function assigned by Aśvaghoṣa to the *kāvya* poetry goes to make it only a handmaid of religion and philosophical thought......'[1]

As is well known, the fragments of all three 'Turfan' dramas can justifiably claim Aśvaghoṣa's authorship. These dramas were written to propagate the teachings of Buddha. The Śāriputra-prakaraṇa is certainly the most interesting among them. First of all because it is a *prakaraṇa*, i.e., the fullest dramatic form besides *nāṭaka* and, therefore, reflecting. Aśvaghoṣa's attitude and treatment of a form which, as we have already said, claims to be an epitome of the entire human existence. Secondly because it contains a theme well known in Buddhistic scriptures. This permits us to reconstruct its plot with a fair chance of remaining true to what Aśvaghoṣa actually wrote. The last words of this play put into the mouth of Buddha speak about increasing knowledge, restraining the senses and gaining release[2]—a statement similar to that made by Aśvaghoṣa at the end of the *Sāundarananda*. Besides, both the heroes of the *prakaraṇa*, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, become 'the highest in knowledge and magic power of Buddha's disciples.'[3] It is obvious that the fate of the heroes of this *prakaraṇa* must have followed the common Buddhistic pattern for the stories of such type exemplified in both the *Sāundarananda* and the *Buddhacarita*. Since it is difficult to say much more about the character of the *itivṛtta* of this *prakaraṇa*, we shall therefore base our subsequent remarks on his two poems. Besides, we shall take recourse to the Buddhist scripture since 'the two sources of poetic emotion, viz., the profound veneration for the person of Buddha and the keen sense of the impermanence of all things and the utter worthlessness of all worldly goods, are in no way peculiar to Aśvaghoṣa. For the same are precisely the sources of the emotion which overflows in the psalms or inspired verses of the early Buddhist brothers and sisters.'[4]

[1] Law, *A*, p. 24.
[2] Keith, *SD*, p. 83.
[3] *op.cit*, p. 81.
[4] Law, *A*, p. 46.

Discussing a postulated indebtedness of Aśvaghoṣa to Kālidāsa, Chattopadhyaya makes a statement which perfectly conveys Aśvaghoṣa's attitude towards life in general and towards his art in particular. 'Aśvaghoṣa's purpose was to rescue men from *viṣaya-rati* and he would best serve his purpose by making his characters begin with enjoyment and end with renunciation, as in the case of the *Sāundarananda*.'[1] This is not the pattern only of the *Sāundarananda*, but it is also equally valid for the *Buddhacarita* and almost certainly for the Śāriputraprakaraṇa, where the Vidūṣaka, a companion of the hero's enjoyments, disappears at the end of the play.[2] It is not difficult to guess that this pattern is nothing else but the life of the Enlightened One himself. It was he who decided to challenge the established way of life. By his decision to abandon family, duties, responsibilities and privileges; by his decision to embark upon the course of renunciation Buddha disregarded the basic principle governing that way of life—the principle of *Yajña*. For it is *Yajña* that rules the life of man. It is the universal sacrifice that manifests itself in man's desire, in his action and in its fulfilment. Refusing to heed this principle of life, Buddha, the greatest revolutionary of human history, refused to be an obedient participant in the univeral *Yajña* and attempted to free himself and others from what might have appeared to him the cosmic slavery thrust upon men by an omnipotent eternal sacrifice. In this way a new hero was born. It was not any more a hero of the fulfilled desires like Indra before, but it has become a peaceful hero of renunciation. Similarly, the background of the new hero's achievement changed from the *dāivāsuram* into the Path of Salvation. Indra was a hero of the integration of multiplicity. Buddha has become a hero of the destruction of multiplicity through renunciation. The *itivṛtta* which has Indra for its *nāyaka* begins with multiplicity and ends in union. The *itivṛtta* which has Buddha for the *nāyaka* begins with union which for a Buddhist is also a veiled multiplicity charged with despair and ends in total extinction of multiplicity through renunciation. How should such a hero act and what is his reward? These were the questions repeatedly directed to Buddha. One among the enqu-

[1] Chattopadhyaya, *DK*, p. 110.
[2] Keith, *SD*, p. 82.

irers was Śāriputra who asked the Buddha: 'what pious works should mark him' (961), 'who abhors the world?' (958). Buddha gives a long answer to this query, saying among other things, that such a man should 'make an end to likes and dislikes, once for all' (968). 'Then come the world's five stains—continues Buddha—which he must set himself to shed by discipline, till he subdues the lust of eye, ear, taste, smell, touch' (974).[1] Another enquirer asks Buddha to expound aloofness and the way of peace (*santipadan*). What outlook leaves man calm with life's stuff spent?' (915) 'Let him pluck out obsession's root—the craze 'I am' (916)—answers Buddha and adds—'For inward Peace (*upasame*) let Almsmen seek nor look for calm (*santim*) elsewhere. With inward peace (*upasantassa*), no Self—no non-Self—dwells (919). As no waves break the calm of ocean's depth, unruffled be the Almsmen's tranquil breast' (920).[2] In order to emphasise our point let us quote still another query in which the Buddha is asked 'In pity, Holy One teach me to live Aloof, that I may clearly see how—calm as th'ether—I may dwell in freedom's Peace' (*santo*) (1065). The Lord puts his answer into following words : 'That peace (*santim*) will I expound to thee. 'Tis here and now; 'tis based on thought not hearsay vain. Walk thou by it with constant watchfulness, leaving the world's entanglements behind.' (1066) And the elated enquirer answers: 'This matchless peace (*santim uttamam*), great sage, rejoices me,—to walk thereby with constant watchfulness and leave the world's entanglements behind.' (1067).[3] To wind up this review of the Scripture's enunciations we shall quote the following advice of the *Sutta-Nipāta*: 'Steer clear of worldly trammels ; stab to death pleasures of sense; *Nirvāṇa* be thy goal; (940)' 'hug not to the past or what today brings forth; bewail not loss; nor sigh for bliss 'Above' (944)'. 'The sage, the Brahmin true, who never strays from truth, on solid ground has set his foot; all things forsaking, he to Peace (*santo*) has come; (946)'. 'He that has triumphed over appetites and burst all worldly shackles here on earth, knows neither grief o'er loss, nor haunting dread (948)'. And finally 'Consume to ashes

[1] Chalmers, *BT*, p. 229-33.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 221.
[3] *op. cit*, p. 251.

past iniquities; thereafter let no fresh defilement grow; if—meantime—thou contract no further guilt, thy feet shall tread the tranquil path of Peace (*upasanto*) (949)'.[1] In this manner, desire, action which brings its fulfilment, delight in worldly pleasures and grief following the unfulfilled desires—all this which makes *Nāṭya* has been contrasted with the matchless Peace or with 'Salvation in the sense of eternal Quiescence of every vestige of life, the absolutely inactive condition of the Universe where all elements or all 'syngeries' will lose their force of energy and will become eternally Quiescent.'[2] This Quiescence is nothing else but *Nirvāṇa* itself.[3] It is only natural to suppose that Buddhist men of letters and especially Aśvaghoṣa, who, as he says himself, wrote for *upaśānti*,[4] noticed difference between his aim and the aim of *Nāṭya* which, after all that we have said, can be termed as exhausting desires through the enjoyment of desires just exactly as the sacrifice itself. Besides, the aim of *Nāṭya* was not to uproot desires together with the emotions inherent in them but to sublimate these emotions into rasas. By no stretch of imagination could *Nāṭya* be said to fulfil this requirement of Buddhism. The reasons for this discrepancy are not difficult to find. According to NŚ *Nāṭya* is the faithful representation of the world with its joys and sorrows and this is why it is giving good instruction as well. For confrontation of man with true reality always generates *hitopadeśa*. The Buddhists on the other hand must have put more stress on the instructive aspect of *Nāṭya* first and foremost. The other aspect of it ceased to be viewed as an impartial representation of the world but became a partisan view of human life envisaged as the path of Peace (*santi-maggam*).[5] How did it happen then, that *Nāṭya* became such a convenient tool in the hands of the propagators of Buddhism? We have already partly given an answer to this question when discussing the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Below we shall submit some

[1] *op. cit*, p. 227.

[2] Stcherbatsky, *BL*, p. 6.

[3] Poussin, *VS HT*, p. 669. '*evaṁ cābhidadhati śāntaṁ nirvāṇam iti*,' Lévi, *MSA*, A. XVIII. 80 '*śāntam nirvāṇaṁ*' etc.

[4] Johnston, *SA*, XVIII. 63, p. 141.

[5] For this term see Jennings, *VBB*, p. 487. Khuddaka-Nikāya, Dhammapada verses.

more arguments serving the same purpose.

Because of his direct Brahminical background (he was a convert) Aśvaghoṣa commanded a good understanding of Hindu theoretical thinking in many fields. This was probably the reason why he noticed difference between the aspect of *Nāṭya* which earned the condemnation of early Buddhism as a part of worldly and sensuous pleasures and *Nāṭya* conceived as a means of good instruction given through the faithful representation of the world and life but, understood in a Buddhistic way, as reflecting man's effort to follow the path of Peace and to attain Buddhahood. Understood in this way, the theoretical interpretation of *Nāṭya* which we have outlined in these pages could have been somehow acceptable to Buddhism. The only aspect which no good Buddhist could ever agree to was the concept of the eight *rasas* as the more or less ultimate purpose of *Nāṭya*. An enjoyment of sublimated emotions is not much better than an enjoyment and attachment to the ordinary emotions of life. The objective of the whole Buddhist discipline is to destroy attachment to things of the world or the desire of them which lies at the root of all emotions. For as Dr. Guenther says, 'the Path of Seeing the Truths destroys the views we hold about ourselves together with the emotions that attach to these views.'[1] Thus a Buddhist will hold either that *rasa* is not a positive value and therefore cannot be considered an ultimate aim in any sense, or, as it actually happened, he will refuse the *rasatva* to all the eight emotions regarding them as mere *kleśas* which have to be finally discarded by any truly Buddhist hero who becomes an Enlightened One or a Śānta himself. In order to convince a spectator that it is worthwhile to follow the illustrious examples of Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Nanda, Jīmūtavāhana or the Buddha himself, a Buddhistic play has to make it clearly felt that none of the eight *rasas* is truly the *rasa* and that none can equal the blissful calm of the man who has discarded them all and whose common appellation in the Buddhist Scripture is *Śānta*. Under such circumstances a surmise made by Dr. Raghavan who looks towards Buddhism for the origin of *śānta rasa* acquires a not unexpected gravity.[2]

[1] Guenther, *PPA*, p. 345.
[2] Raghavan, *NR*, p. 50.

From what we have already said it follows that the encounter of *Nāṭya* and Buddhism must have resulted in a radical change in the interpretation of the emotional aspect of this art. That Buddhism was fully qualified to offer its own interpretation cannot be doubted. It even seems that psychology was more extensively studied by the Buddhists than by their Hindu counterparts. In any case we would refer the doubtful to the comprehensive study of this subject in Dr. Guenther's Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma. In our view the passage on the *śānta rasa* inserted in NŚ bears testimony to the fact that the Buddhists actually had their separate aesthetic theory or at least their separate theory of *rasa*.

The passage in question appears to be the oldest known text on the *Śānta rasa*. The latest date possible for it may even be the beginning of the IXth Century AD since 'Bhaṭṭanāyaka seems to have accepted as genuine the *Śānta* text found in Bharata.'[1] It will be quite reasonable therefore to suppose that a fairly long period of time elapsed between the actual insertion of the text and Bhaṭṭanāyaka's time[2] when the memory of that fact was already indistinct and Bharata's alleged authorship of the passage has become a subject of legitimate controversy. Besides Abhinavagupta himself says that the passage appears only in some old books.[3] The date of the final compilation of NŚ (round the IInd or the IIIrd Century AD) can be accepted as the earliest date possible for this passage. The very doubt as to its genuineness as well as the fact that it has been found only in one manuscript[4] and that it presents ideas about *rasa* which are radically different in both language and content from these presented in other parts of the text, speak convincingly for its being later in origin than the final compilation of NŚ. Since the text in question is very important for our subsequent discussion and since it is very short we shall therefore take the liberty of quoting it here *in extenso*.

'atha śānto nāma śamasthāyibhāvātmako mokṣapravartakaḥ/ sa tu tattvajñānavāirāgyāśayaśuddhyādibhir vibhāvāiḥ samu-

[1] *op. cit*, p. 45. De, *SP*, p. 139.

[2] De, *SP*, p. 41. 'Bhaṭṭanāyaka, therefore, flourished between the last quarter of the 9th and the last quarter of the 10th century.

[3] *HABH*, p. 635.

[4] *NŚ. GOS*, I. Preface, p. 12.

tpādyate|tasya yamaniyamādhyātmadhyānadhāraṇopāsana-sarvabhūtadayāliṅgagrahaṇādibhir anubhāvair abhinayaḥ prayoktavyaḥ|vyabhicāriṇaś cāsya nirveda-smṛtidhṛtisarvā-śramaśāucastambharomāñcādayaḥ|
atrāryāḥ ślokāś ca bhavanti—

mokṣādhyātmasamutthas tattvajñānārthahetusaṁyuktaḥ|
nāiḥśreyasopadiṣṭaḥ śāntaraso nāma sambhavati||
buddhīndriyakarmendriyasaṁrodhādhyātmasaṁsthitopetaḥ|
sarvaprāṇisukhahitaḥ śāntaraso nāma vijñeyaḥ||
na yatra duḥkham na sukhaṁ na dveṣo nāpi matsaraḥ|
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu sa śāntaḥ prathito rasaḥ||
bhāvā vikārā ratyādyāḥ śāntas tu prakṛtir mataḥ|
vikārāḥ prakṛter jātaḥ punas tatrāiva līyate||
svaṁ svaṁ nimittam āsādya śāntād bhāvaḥ pravartate|
punar nimittāpāye ca śānta evopalīyate||'.[1]

Many arguments implicating Mahāyāna Buddhism in the creation of the *śānta rasa* have already been adduced. It remains now to analyse from this point of view the *śanta rasa* text of NŚ which in our view can be claimed with most justification only by the Mahāyānist philosophical schools.[2] The most convincing

[1] *NŚ. KM*, VI, p. 103-4.

[2] It is very difficult to determine on the basis of the internal evidence alone the exact philosophical character of this text. Dr. T.R.V. Murti holds that it can be interpreted in terms of almost any school of thought. Abhinavagupta's commentary suggests at least three possibilities besides Mahāyāna which somehow creeps in when he discusses the *Nāgānanda* of Harṣa and mentions Buddha as the deity of *śānta*. These three possibilities are: the Sāṁkhya (quotes Patañjali and Īśvarakṛṣṇa), the Vedānta (quotes *Bhagavadgītā*) and the Kashmiri Śāiva philosophy which he himself professes. To make the case of the Sāṁkhya convincing it is necessary to introduce a concept of *prakṛtilaya*—a rather far-fetched device since most obviously *śānta* in proper Sāṁkhyan terms would be rather associated with *Puruṣa* and not with *Prakṛti*. Besides there is negligible external evidence permitting to connect sāṁkhya and *Nāṭya*. Īśvarakṛṣṇa twice draws his comparison from the field of *Nāṭya* (SK. 42, *naṭa*, 59, *nartakī*). The Vedānta does not seem to fare better. For it is highly improbable that having to his disposal the *adbhuta rasa* accorded an exceptional position already in NŚ and known as the *rasa* of Brahmā, a Vedāntin would try to introduce an altogether new concept instead of elaborating the one with clear sanction of the basic text. The claim of the Kashmiri Śāiva philosophy of this text, although theoretically possible,

argument against considering the *śānta rasa* concept of NŚ as belonging to any of the Hindu philosophical systems is the fact that Buddha himself is considered the deity of *śānta* by all these who acknowledge the existence of this *rasa*.[1]

To begin with, it may be noted that the prose portion of the *śānta rasa* text employs the technical terminology of Yoga and therefore can easily be considered a product of any school of philosophy including Buddhism; for, as Dr. Lévi rightly remarks there is 'an evident similarity of a certain quantity of technical terms in Buddhism and Yoga.'[2] Yet there is in these lines at least one indication that this passage owes its inspiration to Buddhism in particular. It is an *anubhāva* called *sarvabhūtadayā*. Although not totally absent from other (non-Buddhistic) Yogic denominations, in Buddhism it has received much more attention and has become one of the most characteristic features of a Bodhisattva.[3]

This contention is supported still more strongly by the versified part of the text. The first *śloka* and half of the second one repeat in different words what has been said in the prose passage. But already the second line of the second *śloka* and the third *śloka* bring out strong Buddhistic associations. They speak about *śānta rasa* as beneficial to the happiness of all beings and as a state of equanimity present equally in all beings. The

does not seem to be very probable. The main argument against is the fact that Abhinava himself reveals its doubtful connection with the rest of NŚ, an information which he would not volunteer if he or any of his teachers would have made this insertion. Secondly according to Abhinava a *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta* is *ātman* and not *śama* as in the text. Further he first tries to establish the existence of *śānta* independently of the text (Raghavan, *NR*, p. 15). Finally if a Śāvita is to be held responsible for it then it is difficult to understand why Buddha and not Śiva was chosen as a patron deity of *śānta*. Besides the whole passage in the eyes of Abhinava himself was very old and therefore cannot be connected with a late school of Kashmir (see Abhinava's commentary on *śānta rasa prakaraṇa*).

[1] It is obvious that Buddha here means the divine Buddha, the god, for he is in company of Brahmā and other gods. Buddha standing merely for 'wise' will be out of place here.

[2] Lévi, *MSA*. A, p. 19.

[3] It may be interesting to note that Aśvaghoṣa in the *Sāundarananda* uses another term mentioned in the prose passage. It is *liṅgam parigrahya*. This appears almost like following the rules set in this passage of NŚ.

Mahāyānaviṁśaka of Nāgārjuna has a following verse: 'All things by nature are regarded as reflections. They are pure and naturally quiescent, devoid of any duality, equal and remain always and in all circumstances in the same way.'[1] The characteristic of the *Tathatā* offered by Hiuen Tsang in the Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi is similar. He holds that *Tathatā*, which is the nature of all *Dharmas* and which is *anādikālika*, *prakṛti-śuddha* and *nirvāṇa* itself, is characterised among others by the fact that it is equal (*sama*) and common (*sādhāraṇa*) for all beings and that it is free from all *nimittas* (for it is not apprehensible; it lacks the *grāhyanimitta* quality). The *Tathatā*, which is essentially quiescent (*prakṛtiśanta*, *ādiśānta*) is given the name of *Nirvāṇa*.[2] This *Tathatā* is also identified with the *prakṛti-prabhāsvara-citta* (essentially and originally pure mind).[3] If we may trust the Chinese tradition[4] then all these concepts were already familiar to Aśvaghoṣa who says 'that the essence of all things is one and the same, perfectly calm and tranquil and shows no signs of becoming.'[5] Further he states that 'all beings are uniformly in possession of suchness'[6] and adds later that 'the true nature of all objects is free from relativity, is one and the same, making no distinction between this and that, and is absolutely calm and tranquil.'[7] These ideas Aśvaghoṣa repeats often and concludes that 'things, in their essence, are uncreated, eternally tranquil and *Nirvāṇa* itself.'[8] In this connection one more concept needs to be mentioned. It is the concept of the *ālayavijñāna*. We may be permitted to quote here the opinion of Dr. Zimmer which brings out some of the qualities of the *ālaya-vijñāna* which might have accounted for the concept of

1 Bhattacarya, *MV*, N. 4. '*sarve bhāvāḥ svabhāvena pratibimbasamā matāḥ/śuddhāḥ śāntasvabhāvāś ca advayās tathatāsamāḥ//*

2 Poussin, *VS. HT*, p. 670-1.

3 Jaini, *AD*, p. 116.

4 Regarding the Mahāyānaśraddhotpādaśāstra Dr. Keith writes: 'It is of course, illegitimate *a priori* to hold that such doctrines could not have been adopted or promulgated by Aśvaghoṣa but the evidence for his authorship is not very convincing.' (Keith, *BP*, p. 228) Dr. Dasgupta seems to accept the authorship of Aśvaghoṣa (Dasgupta, *HIP*, p. 129).

5 Suzuki, *ADAFM*, p. 82.

6 *op. cit*, p. 89.

7 *op. cit*, p. 118-9.

8 *op. cit*, p. 143.

śānta rasa. 'Whatever seems to exist is the result of *parikalpa* creating from within', *i.e.*, imagination. But such magically creative thought is possible only because there exists a kind of eternal repository (*ālaya* 'abode') from which can be drawn the substance of every possible image and idea. The individual ceases to exist upon contact with this 'repository consciousness'; for the rippling mental states that constitute the self-awareness of the ego dissolve in it. The term (*ālaya-vijñāna*) is practically synonymous, therefore, with *nirvāṇa* as well as with *śūnya*—yet it suggests always a positive state. *Ālaya-vijñāna* is a kind of Buddhist brahman, which is to be realised by pure mental yoga—absolutely pure consciousness. Indeed, pure consciousness is itself identical with the *ālaya-vijñāna*. And since everything else is but contingent consciousness this pure consciousness is the ultimate reality, the abstract quintessence of all that is.'[1]

Discussing the possibility of the Sāṁkhyan origin of the *śānta rasa* we mentioned that it cannot be thought of as in any sense separate from *puruṣa*, *i.e.*, speaking in general terms it cannot be separate from the subject. As a matter of fact *śānta* is a state of consciousness of the subject. This is why the equation of *śānta* and Sāṁkhyan *Prakṛti* is misleading if not nonsensical. Speaking in Buddhistic terms *prakṛti* (meaning naturally) can be an adjective of consciousness or even better it can denote the nature of the mind.[2] Describing the *ālaya-vijñāna* Dr. Zimmer said that the mental states which constitute the self-awareness of the ego dissolve in it. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is according to him an eternal repository from which can be drawn the substance of every possible image and idea. Dr. Dasgupta in order to illustrate this concept quotes 'the simile of the water and the waves which are stirred up in the ocean. Here the water can be said to be both identical and non-identical with the waves. The waves are stirred up by the wind, but the water remains the same. When the wind ceases the motion of the waves subsides but the water remains the same. Likewise when the mind of all creatures, which in its own nature is pure and clean, is stirred up by the

[1] Zimmer, *PI*, p. 526.

[2] The reason of that confusion might have been that *svabhāva* which is synonymous with *prakṛti* in the sense of nature, which occurs frequently in Sāṁkhya text, is much employed in Buddhist philosophical treatises to express the idea of ultimate reality (Johnston, *ES*, p. 67).

wind of ignorance (*avidyā*), the waves of mentality (*vijñāna*) make their appearance.'[1] Thus we approach the next problem posed by the comparison of *bhāvas* and *vikāras*. The *vikāra*-concept of the Vijñānavāda and the related *Tathatā* school of thought (Aśvaghoṣa) seems to be the probable source of that comparison. All the eight *sthayibhāvas* are nothing else but these waves of mentality which rise from the ocean of the *ālaya-vijñāna*. For whatever rises above the level of the *prakṛtiśānta ālaya-vijñāna* due to *avidyā* all belongs to the sphere of the three *vikāras i.e., indriya, viṣaya, vijñāna*.[2] These mental mutations which characterise the sphere of the *vikāras* cease to exist when ignorance ends and, therefore, the *nimittas i.e.*, the mental images[3] disappear. Consequently, *bhāvas*, which in the technical parlance of the Buddhists are *kleśas*, return to their source which is termed *prakṛtiśānta*.[4]

[1] Dasgupta, *HIP*, p. 132.

[2] Poussin, *VS.TH*, p. 144.

[3] *op.cit*. p. 47 n.2 and p. 546. Guenther, *PPA*, p. 313 says. '...by essence the Path is imageless (*animitta*).'

[4] It can be illustrated in purely Buddhistic terms by a following series of quotations drawn from Guenther's *PPA*. 'It is this tendency to react by emotions that is called the world', *saṁsāra*, as opposed to the tranquil equanimity of *Nirvāṇa* which is attained by radical change of attitude. Sthīramati has dealt with this problem of power of emotions and necessary change of attitude in connection with the idea of an existent substratum of the phenomena of *Saṁsāra* and *Nirvāṇa* (*ālaya-vijñaān* (*ālaya-vijñāna*) (p. 12). Quoting Sthīramati's Triṁśikāvijñaptibhāṣya, p. 38. Guenther says that 'the emotions are, indeed, the root of the fact that the way of the world (*saṁsāra*) continues to exist......For this reason it is necessary to assume a substratum (*ālaya-vijñāna*) which is affected (charged, *bhāvyate*) by the various emotions (kleśopakleśa)... (p. 13). This substratum is nutritive soil for the mutations of the emotions lying in it in a potential state. (p. 14). Spiritual development is essentially a restoration of the psychic equilibrium that has been disturbed by the emotional outburst......the Mahāyānic demand that emotionality as well as interpretation has to be changed into feeling of bliss and comprehensive understanding.' (p. 16).

In the field of dramatic literature it can be best illustrated by the *Nāgānanda*, which most obviously was written following the injunctions of the passage on the *śānta rasa* inserted in NŚ. Modern literary critics persistently ignore in their criticism the theoretical principles of Indian art. Dr. De's opinion regarding the *Nāgānanda* is the best example of this attitude (Dasgupta, *HSL*, p. 258). It is, of course, a perfectly legitimate approach. Yet one would expect a historian of literature to give, not

only his own subjective appreciation of a work of art, but also to give its estimation based, so far as it is possible, on the principles of criticism contemporary to the discussed work of art. The *Nāgānanda* viewed in the light of the *śānta rasa* definition of NŚ appears to be a very consciensciously composed drama. It opens with the *śānta rasa*. Its *vyabhicāribhāva* is hinted at in the stage direction referring to the verse recited by Jīmūtavāhana at his first entrance. It is *nirveda* (Harṣa, *Nāgānanda*, I. 6). But even without this direct reference to *nirveda* it is quite obvious that the dominant sentiment of this passage is the *śānta*. Jīmūtavāhana knows that 'youth is the season of rising passion' but he also is not 'unaware of its transcience' (*Ibid*), This is why he chooses to wait upon his parents instead of taking upon himself the duties and privileges of kingship. He has done whatever he was supposed to do. He has entrusted his kingdom to able officers only after satisfying all needs of the people (*op.cit*, I.8). The equanimity of the hero is perfect: yet the delightful surroundings of the Malaya mountains do not leave him unaffected and his mind becomes to be filled with anxious desire (*op. cit*, I.9). This, followed by eye's throbbing—an auspicious omen indicated in the stage-direction as *nimitta* (an interesting coincidence with the *nimitta* of the *śānta rasa* text which is responsible for appearance of *bhāvas* from the *śānta rasa*), makes Jīmūtavāhana exclaim: 'My right eye throbs, but I have no desire for any boon'. (*op cit*, I.10). Here the *śānta rasa* recedes into the background and gives place to the *śṛṅgāra*, which lasts till the end of Act. II. being sometimes *sambhoga* and sometimes *vipralambha*. This is followed by the *hāsya* of Act III, which lasts till the close of this act and ends with the entrance of Mitrāvasu, who announces Mataṅga's annexation of the kingdom of Vidyādharas and brings with him the *rāudra rasa* (*op.cit*, III. 10). The remaining two acts lead a spectator through a whole gamut of aesthetic experience consisting of all *rasas* with the exception of the *śṛṅgāra* and *hāsya*. The leading *rasa* is, of course, the *śānta* which emanates from the person of Jīmūtavāhana, and is continuously accompanied by the *vīra* which is almost equally inherent to hero's behaviour. The appearance of Śaṅkhacūḍa and his mother in Act IV and the appearance of Jīmūtavāhana's family in Act V is strongly charged with the *karuṇa rasa*, while the person of Garuḍa gives rise to the *bhayānaka*, *raudrā* and *bībhatsa rasas*. Besides the *bībhatsa* is connected with the hero's attitude of loathing his own body (*op.cit*, IV. 7.V.24). The end of the play brings the miraculous appearance of Gāurī, which evokes the *adbhuta rasa*. A non-Buddhistic drama would end here. But the requirements of the *sānta rasa* theory made the Buddhist author of the play put at the end of it a verse which brings to the surface once again the *śānta rasa* (*op. cit*, V.39. also *bharatavākya*) which all the time was underlying the rippling surface of other *rasas*. It seems that emanating from his drama, Harṣa's interpretation of the *śanta rasa* passage of NŚ, was nearer to that of Abhinavagupta than to ours. Apparently Harṣa does not negate *rasatva* to the other *rasas* than *śanta*. Yet he clearly accords to the *śānta* a leading role in the drama. Besides Abhinava's

In order to wind up our brief discussion of the Buddhist sources of the *śānta rasa* we shall mention one more concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism which seems to give additional force to our theory. Here we have in mind the concept of *ekarasa*. This concept expresses '...the sameness of the emotional feeling, tone and value (*ekarasa*, *samarasa*) as to the arbitrary division of life into a part called *Saṁsāra* and another called *Nirvāṇa* ..'[1] 'The thinking associated with *samatājñāna*......establishes the *apratiṣṭhita-nirvāṇa*, which is said to be *ekarasa*.'[2] *Ekarasa* is also a state in which all *dharmas* enter through the absence of mental images and through the peace of *nirvikalpa* mind.'[3] Besides 'the Absolute (Nature) is like Space whole of one single taste.'[4] Thus it appears that *ekarasa* is one more attribute of *Nirvāṇa* or rather of *ālaya-vijñāna* (since it is common to both *Saṁsāra* and *Nirvāṇa*) expressing the perfect mental equipoise of this state. It is possible that Aśvaghoṣa had in mind the *ekarasa* concept when he wrote that 'in essence of suchness there is neither anything to be excluded, nor anything which has to be added.'[5] Finally Asaṅga makes in his *Sūtrālaṁāra* a statement which puts together both the idea of peace and of *ekarasa*. 'If one takes initiative of saving all beings; if he is a good connoisseur of the universal knowledge of the Vehicle; if he finds in *Nirvāṇa* the unique taste of transmigration and of Peace; such a wise (man) is to be known as universal himself.'[6] This concept of the *ekarasa* throws an interesting light on the fact that the *śānta rasa* apparently negates the existence of all the

comparison of the *śānta* and the other *rasas* to a string and to the beads strung on it seems to apply to the *Nāgānanda* also. This would indicate that it is not an original idea of Abhinavagupta.

1 *op.cit*, p. 213-4.

2 Poussin, *VS.HT*, p. 683.

3 *op.cit*, p. 598. '*tasmiṁś ca nirabhilāpye vastumātre nirnimittayā nirvikalpacittaśāntyā sarvadharmasamatāikarasagāmī*/'

4 Lévi, *MESV*, p. 117, *ekarasaḥ*: *sarvāikarasārthena*.

5 Suzuki, *ADAFM*, p. 57.

6 Lévi, *MSA*. A, II.3. '*sarvān satyāṁs tārayituṁ yaḥ pratipanno yāne jñāne sarvagate kāuśalyayuktaḥ/ yo nirvāṇe saṃsṛtiśāntyekaraso' sāu jñeyo dhīmān eṣa hi sarvatraga evaṁ//*. Lévi chooses *saṁsaraṇe' pi ekaraso* and gives a variant reading *saṁsṛtiśālyekaḥ raso*. I have followed the reading suggested in the Japanese Index to the Sūtrālaṁkāra of Asaṅga. For *ekarasa* see also *op. cit*, XIV. 7.

eight *rasas*. For NŚ's text on it says that the *bhāvas* like *rati* etc. arise from *śānta* and find their repose in it. Thus it denies to the *bhāvas* the privilege of becoming *rasas* since there is only the one *rasa* of Peace (*śāntyekarasa*). We face here, therefore, not an effort to add one more *rasa* to the existing eight but a total challenge to the basic aim of *Nāṭya* expressed in a famous *sūtra* of NŚ, '*vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṁyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ*'. For if *śānta rasa* is the source of other *bhāvas* and their destination, it means that it cannot have *niṣpatti* since it is eternal. The above *sūtra* therefore may concern only *bhāvas*. The objective of the Buddhist *Nāṭya* appears to be the destruction of the eight *rasas* (to which a true *rasatva* has been refused) for the sake of the one true *rasa* which is *śānta*. The Buddhist reaction offered in this way a totally different interpretation of *Nāṭya* in concert with Buddhist philosophical thinking. But soon the rapid stream of reaction was lost almost beyond recognition in the quiet lake of Hindu eclecticism into which Buddhism and its revolutionary concept of *rasa* were absorbed. It remains only to answer how ideas so diametrically opposed to these contained in all the rest of NŚ found its way into it. At the best we can offer only a hypothetical explanation of this process. At the very beginning we shall recall some already known features of the test of NŚ. We saw how Vedic and Brāhmaṇic ideas coexist there with Śāiva and Vāiṣṇava traits. We have seen also how the first *adhyāya* and the last one seem to be controversial. In this light NŚ emerges already before its final compilation as a collection of many conflicting ideas. It is not surprising, therefore, that even later on, the *nāṭyacāryās* might have followed the same pattern and might have tried to incorporate into the basic manual of their art everything which took roots in the society. Pursuing our hypothesis further we may suggest that the Buddhist *Nāṭya* beginning with Aśvaghoṣa who might have already had in front of him a Buddhistic work on poetry,[1] down to Harṣa including that mysterious Rahula who wrote a treatise on *Nāṭya*, must have been well developed theoretically and quite popular among the people. As the names mentioned above suggest, there existed Buddhist theoretical works, probably propounding *śānta rasa* theory, formulated on

[1] Law, *A*, p. 24.

the basis of the Vijñānavāda philosophy or the related *Tathatā* school. Under such circumstances the traditional exponents of *Nāṭya* might have been forced by a popular demand to include the Buddhistic plays into their repertoire.[1] This was followed by an effort to insert the theoretical tenets of the Buddhist *Nāṭya* into NŚ, thus providing the sanction of the most respected authority in the field for this type of repertoire. That it was done perforce and that the *nāṭyācārya* responsible for this operation was not a trained philosopher is evident. In his eyes first of all *śānta* could have been only one more *rasa*. Besides he had to give to the passage dealing with it a form similar to the passages dealing with other *rasas*. The result of his labour betrays the existence of a highly philosophical and speculative source of his material. But the unfamiliarity of this hypothetical *nāṭyācārya* with philosophy on the one hand and his unwillingness to see the total divergence of both views on the other, resulted in the philosophical vagueness of the text. Besides, the requirements of an ideal falsification introduced the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* etc.—concepts altogether unsuited to the *śānta rasa* since as we have said it is a state existing eternally and only obscured by the *vikāra*-like *bhāvas*. Despite all this, the basic allegiance of the concept of *śānta rasa* to Mahāyāna Buddhism cannot be doubted.

[1] It is interesting to note that the Sanskrit theatre of Kerala (*Kūḍiyāṭṭam*) has still in its repertoire the *Nāgānanda* of Harṣa. At the same time the only manuscript which contains the *śānta rasa* text was found in Kerala (*NŚ.GO.S*, I. preface, p. 12). It might be therefore that the fusion of both trends actually happened in the South.

12

CONCLUSION

NŚ is an outstanding work in its class. It marks an apogee in the history of theatre. This is not merely an attempt to boost the source of our own inspiration; it is the assessment of one who was bred—so to speak—in the green-room of the European theatre. It is enough to compare the curriculum of any of the most advanced schools of theatre, with the content of NŚ in order to conclude that this treatise embodies all that is still today considered the essentials of theatre.

NŚ is a manual of the art of theatre. It is a thoroughly practical treatise designed to be a convenient guide-book for a man of theatre in his professional life. The material which NŚ contains is enormous and, we can safely say, marks one of the highest tides in the development of histrionic art. The character of the technical analysis, which NŚ presents, indicates that fairly long and certainly many-sided theoretical inquiry into the nature of theatre must have preceded the actual formulation of the laws and regulations of NŚ. In our study we have made an attempt to discover or rather to reconstruct this theoretical thinking which underlies the practical formulae of NŚ and which in our view found its most direct expression in its mythological passages.

NŚ accords to theatre a place second to none but life itself. Actors consecrated by the great sacrificial session of the *Nāṭya-veda* become Brahmins—the priests whose only King is Soma, the illuminer of heaven—the Sacrifice itself. A *yajamāna* of this wonderful Sacrifice is the spectator—the one possessed of heart. *Rasa* is the oblation poured into the heart's flame. Recitations are the *Ṛc* verses; *Abhinayas* are the *Yajus* formulae; songs are the *Sāman* chants. The reward of this Sacrifice is the commu-

nion with Brahman. The pulse of *Nāṭya* beats in accord with the pulse of the Universe, or of life which is none other than the Sacrifice itself. The heart's consent—a concept of the aestheticians—was not only a requirement of theatre but also of life itself. The great Sacrifice of the Universe inspired awe and enthusiasm. Man born of desire was looking for the bliss of eternity in the fulfilment of desire. The Essence of Wonder which transpires from the Vedic prayers expresses man's relationship to the mystery of Creation—the mystery of *Yajña*. Immortality for the man of that epoch was to live the full span of life and to be happy. In other words immortality was participation in the eternal *Nāṭyottama* of existence with the heart's willing consent. Man's identity with the cosmic Sacrifice was willingly acknowledged and accepted. Yet this attitude slowly began to change. Without the previous enthusiastic heart's consent, man, no longer uninhibited, could not any more play his part in the sacrificial ritual of life. More and more he felt himself a slave of a cosmic robot whose name was *Yajña*. Looking for answers to the questions which tormented him man indulged in mortifications and meditations. Finally awakened (*Buddha*), he challenged the claim of the Universe of himself. That man found the only meaning of the drama of life in its cessation. The tumultuous joy and sorrow of movement, form, colour, sound and light which make the stream of life flow, was nothing but a painful appearance. Renunciation appeared then to be the only possible course of action in life as well as on the stage. Once deprived of his heart's consent, man found his only true destiny in transcending *Yajña*. He saw his reward in the eternal quiescence of an uninterrupted Peace. The rapid and sparkling streams of the Essence of Wonder, Love, Mirth, Pathos, Fury, Heroism, Terror, and Disgust, stopped by the rocks of renunciation, turned out to be a cool and motionless lake of the Essence of Peace; what before appeared to be a stream was only the rippling surface of that lake—a mere appearance not deserving attention. The previous participation in life's Sacrifice was replaced by the Path of Liberation from it. In the terms of theatre the eight *rasas* with the *Adbhuta* as their king disappeared in the all-embracing ocean of the *Śānta rasa*. Indra, a hero of the Sacrifice, was succeeded by Buddha, a hero of the Path of Salvation.

Our conclusion belongs to the field of the philosophy of *Nāṭya* This is the earliest stage of it. We have ended with the Buddhist reaction to the earlier sacrificial theory of *Nāṭya*. But this was only the beginning of a process which continued further on. *Nāṭya* never stood apart from the main currents of intellectual life. The pursuers of this discipline interpreted *Nāṭya* in terms of their philosophical convictions. Thus we can speak about the Vedāntic interpretation which *Nāṭya* received from the hands of Bhaṭṭanāyaka.[1] Further a Śāiva interpretation was given to it by Abhinavagupta. Śāradātanaya viewed it from the Vāiṣṇava position and Bhoja was influenced in its treatment by Sāṁkhya philosophy.[2] These names may be easily multiplied. But it does not any more belong to the scope of the present study. We shall therefore end here signalling a forgotten chapter in the history of Indian aesthetics which we venture to call the philosophy of theatre (*nāṭya-darśana*).

[1] Raghavan, *NR*, p. 44.
[2] Raghavan, *BSP*, pp. 479 and 757.

POSTSCRIPT

Several years have passed since the completion of this work. Now, from the perspective thus acquired I see its merits, and above all its shortcomings, in a new light. There has, of course, been a temptation to rewrite some portions of it. But finally I decided to place it in the hands of the readers in its more or less original form. This is because my subsequent readings and discussions left my basic thesis intact although proving beyond doubt my great limitations and handicaps in presenting it. Availing myself of this opportunity I would like to add a few thoughts to this study which may clarify some of the points which have been found controversial, among others by Professor J. Gonda of Utrecht to whom I am greatly indebted for his criticism.

One of the most important problems of this nature concerns the identity of *Nāṭya* and *Yajña*. I would ask the reader to return for a moment to the conclusion of the discussion of the *itivṛtta*. Here I would add only one more observation: the identity of the world and the mystical oneness of reality is a cliché of the Indian thinking, yet to a European the same still sounds blasphemy.

Passing over to more detailed problems I would like to state that while reviewing all the earlier contributions to the knowledge of the classical Indian theatre, I was fully aware of their historical approach. But this fact cannot absolve those contributions from the guilt of missing the mythological account of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* for historical ends. In that discussion I have omitted two rather important books which were not available at Banaras at that time. The first is that of S. Lévi, *Le Theatre Indien*, Paris 1890 and the second is that of S. Konow, *Das Indische Drama*, Berlin 1920, also available in an English translation entitled *The Indian Drama*, by S. N. Ghosal, Calcutta 1960. Both books are now somewhat obsolete and contribute little new material. There is however, one point

which might be mentioned and this is Konow's rendering of the term *niyatāpti* which, according to him is "the delayed obtainment (and) the confidence that this will succeed after the obstructing impediments are wiped out." (p. 31). Although the rendering of the term in question tallies substantially with mine, the subsequent remark proves that Konow understood this concept in the traditional way.

A much more important contribution regarding the *sandhis* is that of T.G. Mainkar entitled *The Theory of the Saṁdhis and the Saṁdhyangas*, Poona, 1960. The author brings out a lot of material directly relevant to what I discuss but while admiting of disruption or frustration in the *vimarśa sandhi* he nevertheless understands the *niyatāpti avasthā* in the traditional way and thus does not sound very convincing.

Considering the mythology of the *Nāṭyotpatti* I quite consciously limited myself in my argumentation, trying to marshall just enough arguments and evidence to prove my point and yet not to enter into controversies belonging to the early history of the Hindu religion as well as the character of the gods and their worship. Here I would additionally like to mention the book by H. Lüders entitled *Varuṇa*, Göttingen, 1951 in connection with my discussion of the character of that god. Lüders does not make much of Varuṇa as the god of space and thus seems to contradict what I have said on the subject. He is inclined to consider him through and through a god of waters. Yet since at some instances Varuṇa is undoubtedly associated with the space above (of which fact Lüders takes duly a note, pp. 54-56 he explains it away by saying that even there, Varuṇa is a denizen of the heavenly receptacle of waters. Far from challenging this argument I shall only point that the space aspect of the god in question cannot be denied and since it almost totally disappears from later accounts, to be traced only in the Veda, I still feel justified in believing that this aspect of Varuṇa may be taken as indicating a considerable antiquity of the image of him which the Nāṭyaśāstra presents. At this point I may also draw the attention of the reader to the book by T. Bhattacharya, *The Cult of Brahma*, Patna, 1957, which, though highly controversial, contributes some interesting information concerning that god.

Considerably less important for my main thesis is the problem

of the *purāṇas* and the intricacies of the mythological world that they present. Since it is quite obvious that their claim on the mythology of NŚ can be but almost none, I have permitted myself to treat this problem very briefly, while it has been treated in all detail in the works of W. Kirfel and P. Hacker.

As regards my treatment of the Indramaha festival and the concept of wrestling competitions, I would like to stress that my aim in the present work was neither to offer an exhaustive study of the Indramaha nor a similar study of the connection between drama and the wrestling competitions. My main preoccupation was with the relationship between theatre and *Yajña* as well as *dāivāsuram*. I have touched upon the Indramaha and the wrestling competitions only in so far as they are helpful in understanding that relationship. For a more detailed discussion of these aspects I would refer the reader to J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Machte und Feste der Vegetation*. Zürich-Leipzig, 1937 and L. von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus*, Leipzig, 1908.

Having completed my studies in 1964 at Banaras, I was completely unaware of the study of J. Gonda entitled *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, The Hague, 1963 published, as the date shows, almost simultaneously. This book contains extremely valuable and rich material, almost in its entirety relevant to that part of my work which deals with the role of the sages in the revelation of the *Nāṭyaveda*. After careful perusal of this book, to my great satisfaction, I have been confirmed in my views.

In the history of religion the problem of dating naturally becomes a subject of controversy. In my work, though, I do not claim any originality in this respect and I tried to follow those opinions which appeared to me the most convincing and the most widely accepted. It is not impossible, though, that the dates I suggest could be reconsidered in the light of new findings. I myself attach importance only to the relative chronology, insisting that the content of the *Nāṭyotpatti adhyāya* should be considered as old as the close of the period of the *brāhmaṇas* and the beginning of the epic period.

A further aspect of my study which seems to require an additional gloss on my part, is the manner I discuss the *itivṛtta* and especially the *arthaprakṛtis*. Here I did try to follow the

time honoured method of the traditional Indian scholarly enquiry—i.e., an interpretation of the basic text which takes its initial impulse from it and elucidates it claiming for itself fidelity of spirit rather than of letter. Considering the nature of my subject, I felt justified in this approach.

Finally, I would like to beg indulgence of the reader for quoting a rather antiquated translation of the Ṛgveda. Being neither an Englishman nor a Vedic scholar, I did not feel quite qualified to undertake a new translation and I decided to chose Wilson's prose rendering for my quotations. Nevertheless, whenever the situation demanded I did refer directly to the original.

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